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Among the other contributors to the March number will be Edgar Saltus, Kate Jordan, Bliss Carman, Gelett Burgess, Edith M. Thomas, James Branch Cabell and Theodosia Garrison

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THE WANDERERS

By Gertrude Lynch

UP-STAIRS, peace; down-stairs, war. Up-stairs, the rustle of breeze-swept curtains, and the gentle breath of a sleeping child; down-stairs, the clatter of angry heels on hardwood floors, the crash of fragile articles of bric-à-brac, to emphasize abuse, high words, quick, tumultuous gasps. Up-stairs, the smile with which a boy greets his dreamland companions after a day's separation; down-stairs, looks of hate as the boy's parents face each other in the crisis of their lives. Up-stairs, the cause; down-stairs, the effect.

"You have lied to me! You have always lied to me, but this transcends all. And to think that I was such a fool as to believe you!"

The man's voice was filled with contempt, and he struck the table, violently, with his hand.

The face of the woman opposite was distorted with rage. "Did you think that I had taken leave of my senses? Give up my child—the one being on earth I love, have ever loved? Separate myself from him forever? Lied! Of course, I lied! What woman, what mother, would not lie?"

The fingers of the man followed his collar as if its pressure choked him.

"Let us understand each other!"

The woman shrugged her shoulders, contemptuously. "Understand each other? We never have done so. Why should we expect to now? We commenced to misunderstand the day we married, and we have misunderstood ever since."

"I have no desire to go into the past again," the man said. "I have no desire to repeat a twice-told tale.

When I said 'understand,' I meant this." He pointed to the decree of divorce on the table between them. "You promised that, if I would save your name, if I would allow you to obtain the decree, even though I had the right, you would give me the child. You prayed to me on your knees to do this. You clung to me when I was obdurate. You threatened to kill yourself. I—I yielded at last, not because I pitied you, not because I cared what became of you, but because you were Lee's mother, and all that was left me in life was his future, to save it from you, from the contamination of your example and teaching. I yielded, weakly enough, against my judgment. I was a fool. I believed in you at that crucial moment, even though your past had been a network of deceit. And now——"

"And now?" the woman repeated after him, tauntingly.

"The law has given us our freedom, and you my child. And you dare to stand there and tell me that you are going to break your vow to me; that you will, if necessary, invoke that law in your behalf; in a word, that you intend to keep Lee."

"That is what I mean!" Her tone was as cold as ice; only the flaming eyes showed the inner fire. "I shall keep my child. I have always intended to do so. I lied to you, it is true, but any woman would have done the same. My falsehood was justifiable. Give up Lee?" She laughed, derisively. "Misunderstand? This is the crown and climax of your blindness in regard to me. You thought you had married a pretty fool, a play-

thing, willing to accept your attentions and caresses while the novelty lasted, willing to sink into the background, to be a mere figurehead, when satiety came. You thought that I would stand indifference, neglect, disdain. When you found I was of different mettle——”

The man thrust his hands forward, as if pushing something distasteful away.

“Have we not threshed this over and over? What is left but the dust of a thousand conflicts?”

The woman waited, breathlessly, until he had finished; then she took up the thread of her interrupted tirade.

“And the last insult—your insufferable suspicions; your goadings, until I reached the point when to give you what you desired—a cause for those suspicions—seemed the only way out of my misery—the only path to freedom!”

Like a tigress, she walked back and forth.

“How I hate it all! How I hate you, and the years of my life you have spoiled!”

The man sank into a chair by the table, interlocking his fingers, and hiding his face in them, as if to shut out the clamor of her reiterated assertions. The movement brought him self-control. He glanced up suddenly, wheeled his chair about, and looked at her, all the anger gone from his expression and voice.

“Listen!” There was something dominating in his word, and, yielding to it, or exhausted by the force of her emotions, she flung herself into a seat on the other side of the table. The passion which had distorted her face disappeared, but where reason had succeeded in his, in hers there was merely restraint, as the lull which precedes the last terrific burst of the hurricane.

“Listen! To-night, this hour, is the last we shall spend together. Few marriages are dissolved by the fault of one alone. Granted that you have suffered neglect, indifference, suspicion, I, too, have suffered from a tie which has bound me to a woman who has never

had my ambitions or interest at heart, who has thwarted me continually through frivolity or maliciousness in all I hold sacred, and who, finally, whether in wanton carelessness or weakness, has made it impossible for me to forgive her. The shibboleth preached by the legion of I-told-you-so’s, might be applied to my case. I married you for your beautiful face, it is true, but so long as God makes man, so long will He make him quick to anger and to love, believing such passion heaven-sent when it rules him with inexplicable force. I did not take it and separate it into its component elements. I did not say, ‘Is she good? Is she amiable? Is she charitable, housewifely, discreet?’ I loved you because you were you, and I was I. And you loved me because I was the most eligible man of your acquaintance; because I made you the richest presents, was most obedient to your caprices, most flagrant in flattery. We loved, and now we hate. We would be indifferent did we not still have something to fight over. It is the old story.”

He drew his breath with a quick gasp. “All this is immaterial. I forgot myself; I ask you, I pray you; I will get on my knees to you, if necessary, as you did to me when, against my judgment, I yielded to your tears—give me the child! The law allots him to you, it is true, but by every moral right he is mine. Never would I have consented to your wish had I not believed that, false as you have always been, at the supreme test you would be true to a higher standard than your own selfish cruelty. Give him to me! Let me take him in my arms, and go out of your life. You are still young, still beautiful and attractive. You have come out of a disgraceful situation with clean garments. You will marry again. My life is broken. He is all I have, all I want, all I shall ever want. You promised with the most sacred words you could invoke. Keep that promise, I beg you!”

“You have quite finished?”

He started violently. He read her answer in the metallic tone of her voice

and in the steely glitter of her eye, which gazed past, but never directly in, his face.

"Not quite. I have entreated, implored, humiliated myself; now I say to you, take care! I am not a weakling—you know that. I can fight, if need be. I can wait. I can meet your treachery with like treachery. I can use the weapons you have chosen."

"That!" and she snapped her fingers theatrically in the air; "*that* for your humiliation, your entreaties and your threats. They are all indifferent to me. I have little use for the law, with its moth-eaten traditions and its swaddling bands of red tape; it is as archaic as other worn-out restraints—marriage, for instance—but in this case it has stood me in good stead, and, if necessary, I shall invoke its aid to protect me against your violence and your plots. A weak citadel is better than none."

A discreet cough interrupted her.

"The carriage is waiting, madame."

She nodded to the man, whose impassive, well-trained face gave no hint as to his cognizance of the situation.

"Very well, I will come immediately."

The portières fell into place as the servant withdrew.

She arose, and drew a long cloak, which had been thrown on the back of her chair, over her bare shoulders.

He glanced at the clock. "You are going to a ball, *to-night*?"

He seemed for the first time conscious of her gala attire, of the jewels sparkling on her throat and in her hair.

"Did you think I was honoring our divorce?" she responded, tauntingly, as she swept her train aside with a lithe motion.

The feathers of her cloak brushed his hand as she passed, but no tremor passed through him; his eyes, burning like coals, failed to command hers.

At the entrance, she stood for a moment, her jeweled hands raised above her head on either side, grasping and withdrawing the heavy portières, her head slightly turned over her shoulder,

her glance fixed on the caduceus of a bronze Mercury, tip-toeing on the edge of a book-shelf.

"You will be here when I return? You came to-night to settle this question. It *is* settled. You know my hospitality is elastic, but I am, in the eyes of the world, an unmarried woman, and you are an unmarried man. The proprieties—" She raised her voice slightly, as if interrogating his advice, and her gaze still rested on the caduceus of the god until her lips formed a sinuous likeness to its curves.

He stood rigid, waiting in conventional respect for her exit.

"The proprieties shall be observed; your name protected, as it has ever been. I shall leave"—he glanced at the clock—"within the hour."

The folds of the portière fell into place. In a moment, he heard the outer door close and the tramp of the horses on the asphalt.

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and strode restlessly up and down; the horizontal furrows in his forehead, the bent head and relaxed shoulders witnessed the severity of the crisis he had reached.

He had said all, and to no purpose. Better would it have been for him to have suffered on. If he had adjusted the burden of unfaith and uncongeniality to his shoulders, he would at least have saved his child. What had he gained? New sorrows for old.

Step by step he retraced the past—the mad passion of youth, unwise, unquestioning, unread; a pursuit, balked and provoked by the wiles of a coquette finished in her art at the age when a man is wax; ambitions and time sacrificed to one end, and, the end gained, disgust and rebellion appearing. He had built his house on the sands, and now he blamed the sands for not being rock—that was it; it was the knowledge of his own weakness which overwhelmed him.

He muttered under his breath, and withdrew his thoughts from the irrevocable, only to return to it a second later.

He recalled the picture she made as

she stood outlined in supple grace against the background of softly falling drapery; the face piquant, malicious; the smile oriental in its suggestiveness.

Was what she had stated true? Had he ever understood her? Had he ever tried to understand her? Daily intercourse had robbed her coquettishness of its attraction; beyond had risen a high, blank-faced wall. He had believed that wall the bounds of her character; instead, had it hidden fallow fields? He dismissed the thought, angrily. No, she was what he had taught himself to believe—a shallow woman, pleasure-crazed, a vampire to destroy the soul and mind. *Taught* himself—that was it. He had adopted a creed hastily, and fitted his life to it.

Was her maternal anxiety real? Had she deceived him through love of their child, or because she knew that only in this way she could hurt him? Which, then, had been acting? Suppose she did love him, was not the love of a selfish woman worse than her indifference? He pictured the household of the future, a stepfather, jealous of the child, wreaking, in petty ways, his dislike and fear; Lee, the innocent cause of daily strife, forced into open rebellion or weak deceit.

Both of them had been weak and wicked. They had taken the great responsibilities of life, as a child picks up a shining stone on the shore, and, when the gloss disappeared and the stone became heavy, they had flung it aside.

He sank into the easy-chair, and buried his face in his hands.

Fifteen minutes later, he rang the bell, and, at the summons, a servant appeared.

"Is everything ready?"

"As you ordered, sir."

"You remembered that I would come to-night?"

"Yes, sir."

"The carriage will be here?"

"In half an hour."

"No one knows?"

"Not a soul, sir."

"And I can trust you?"

"Absolutely!"

The man turned to go, but the other detained him with a gesture.

"You are determined to leave your place, Charles? Remember, it may not be easy to find another so good."

"I shall finish my month out here, sir; that is all."

"Very well. I shall not lose sight of you; and if I should want you?"

"I am at your service, always, sir."

They shook hands—master and man—as two who faced a long separation. The man's face was impassive, but his hands trembled, and the master had in his eyes the expression of one who is wrenching himself free from attachments of long standing.

In half an hour! He looked about the room, taking farewell of its mute objects. The house had been one of his early gifts to his bride; now it was no more to him than the jewel she wore on her finger, yet he could not detach himself without pain from that indefinable power which binds one to locality.

He glanced lovingly at the long rows of books, at the bits of priceless bric-à-brac, at the joyous Mercury, at the soft marines, whose spray glistened from the stealthy shadows of dim corners. He said good-bye, over and over, to the retreat which had sheltered him many times when his soul was raw and bleeding.

The cruel moments passed.

He drew himself to his full height, and glanced at the clock. He was weak no longer. His lips were firmly set, his brow smooth, his eyes clear both of the fire of anger and the mistiness of regret.

He went up-stairs softly, and, at the entrance of his child's room, stopped. Hatred had gone even from his thought; only love reigned supreme, omnipotent.

He crossed the apartment, closed the door into the inner room, and sat on the edge of the bed.

His intent gaze disturbed the sleeper, who turned restlessly, and in a moment, open-eyed, alert, as a child wakes from his slumbers, Lee looked at him;

then, raising himself, put out his arms to be taken, with the gesture of a child who has never learned refusal.

His father bent forward and, catching him in the circle of his arms, he swayed him gently back and forth until the eyelids closed, and, suddenly as he had awakened, so suddenly did he sleep again.

II

MRS. RENAU returned from the ball early. She had gone there for a purpose, a purpose different from the uncontrollable pursuit of pleasure, which was her normal impulse. She accomplished it by showing herself more exquisitely dressed, if that were possible, than usual; by smiling at friend and foe alike. She could not, however, prevent a slight exaggeration of cheerfulness, although she knew and resented this breach of good acting. Self-control had never been listed in the curriculum of her worldly studies, and one cannot, at will, display proficiency where there has been no rehearsal.

She was free, and no one, not her dearest friend or most bitter rival, could find a flaw in the method by which her yoke had been removed. But her freedom left her open to the criticism of a world still conservative in its treatment of a young and beautiful woman who has broken public vows. She had been guarded before; now she was exposed to the cynicism of a social clique whose members believed every one guilty until proved innocent, and had neither the time nor the inclination to listen to the proof, no matter how strongly presented.

"How well she appears," whispered one of her intimates, through the gauze of her fan to a man who had eaten her husband's dinners for years, listened tri-weekly to her monologue of marital unhappiness, and whose quality of sympathy, like that of mercy, was not strained.

"Well, why shouldn't she?" he an-

swered, irritated by the unspoken thought. "She's young and free and handsome. Poor devil! he's the one to pity. He's acted like a gentleman through it all."

"But a divorce!"

"You surely aren't getting scrupulous!"

She looked at him coldly. "I am always scrupulous where appearances are concerned. I thought you knew that."

The man met her rebuke silently.

"How I envy you!" whispered another so-called friend, with an airy gesture, imitating a released butterfly. "If my George would only give me some cause for complaint—but he never will. He's too good to be true, and too true to be good—for me. I need a wicked husband. I'm getting absolutely hungry for a fierce marital quarrel. It's the best thing in the world for acute indigestion. Think of it—a divorce—the real article, no sham, no subterfuge, while I cannot even have a separation. It's better to be born with a rabbit's foot in the mouth than a golden spoon, isn't it?"

Two men, in a corner of the smoking-room, discussed the latest titbit of scandal.

"Did you see the evening papers? By Jove, they managed it cleverly. Only a dignified sum total, no distressing details. I wonder"—he glanced across the room to where a third man was idly looking at a hunting print—"if—" A nod weighted with significance finished the sentence.

"Of course," the second replied. "I'll give them three weeks—isn't that the time that etiquette demands? I'm rusty. It will be a good thing for him. I don't believe he's any too well fixed, and Renau has left her handsomely provided for, they say."

"Who gets the child?"

"Oh, she does; child, alimony, freedom—everything."

"I wonder how Trafford will welcome the onerous duty of bringing up another man's child?"

"Poor little chap—or is it a girl?—I don't envy him his stepfather."

Traff isn't wasting sentiment. He never did have an excess when he was a youth, and, if you notice, none of us adds it to his stock of attractions as time goes on."

Mary Renau was apparently unconscious of this undercurrent of conjecture and interest, but the superficial compliments, the light badinage, the eyes watching her with unflagging zeal whichever way she turned, really prevented her from forgetting, even for a moment, the fact that her attitude toward society, and society's attitude toward her, had changed. In the past, she had gone with the stream; now she was swimming against it. It would not be very difficult, for there were many stretches where the current was almost imperceptible; but, on the other hand, there would be places when it would need all her strength to hold her own.

For the first time in her life she derived no pleasure from the world whose comings and goings were as the breath of her nostrils. The music, lights, perfumes, the idle chit-chat, the mocking jest and reckless atmosphere, wearied her. She was suddenly tired and distrait. She had been under a great strain lately, and was beginning now to suffer from reaction. She would go home. *Home!* how sweet the word sounded! Her husband—no, the man who had been her husband—would have gone back to the bachelor apartment where he had lived while the legal proceedings connected with their divorce had been going on, and she would find peace awaiting her. The jarring element had been removed forever. There would be no one in the future to disturb her with exactions and jealousies, no one to hurt her by neglect.

While she exchanged light repartee with a man who had stopped her progress toward a half-concealed staircase which led to the dressing-rooms, and by which she contemplated escape, she decided that it would not do to seclude herself, at present, but as soon as she found it advisable, she

and Lee would go to some quiet place and recuperate.

She came leisurely down the stairway, muffled in her becoming wraps, and, at the foot, found Paul Trafford awaiting her. He had spoken to her only once during the evening—quiet words of good taste; for, whatever his faults might be, according to the judgment of his own sex, he balanced those of omission and commission, he never offended in the direction of wounding one's sense of the fitness of things. He had complimented her about the beauty of her gown, in phrases he might have used at any time during their acquaintance, and, for the few remaining moments they were together, he limited his speech, if not his thought, to generalities. She liked him for it. She would have hated even a suggestive glance. How well he knew her! It might be true what the world said, that his heart never ran away with his head, but she was tired of tandem runaways, heart and head equally turbulent, and his poise and serenity had always been to her magnetic and compelling.

He put her in the carriage, arranged her dress and the rug about her feet, and said good night.

She sank back on the cushions with a sigh of relief. He had not even asked her to name the hour for a future meeting, and had remembered to tell the coachman to drive slowly, recalling her dislike to rapid motion.

Paul Trafford had been forbidden Mary Renau's house once. Could she ever forget that evening, fraught with its fear of personal violence, the dread that some one of the servants would hear and the secret become known to her world, by menial curiosity, that short-cut to exposure? How well he had acted! With what force and conviction he had explained a compromising situation, and how gracefully he had withdrawn, without sacrificing his dignity or her own. How he had guarded her, even from his own emotions, while the other, Graham Renau, had made her a football for his moods.

There was no one now to forbid Paul Trafford the house, or any other man whom she fancied.

She lowered the window, and breathed the cool night air. She was free, her life before her. The burden of a marriage which had become a nightmare was removed. She would have her fling now; she would give to the world what it gave her—jest for jest, criticism for criticism, light love for light love, forgetfulness for forgetfulness. What if she had thrown her glove in the face of society? She was brave enough and strong enough to stand by her challenge. She felt better already; the momentary weakness of tired nerves was replaced by the strength of decision.

She loved the world—and hated it. She loved it for its power of making one forget, for its stimulation, its refinement and its cloth-of-gold tournaments. She hated it for its shallowness, its memories, its mornings-after, when the field of the tournaments was covered with shattered spears, bits of soiled lace and trampled flowers.

She closed her eyes and, lulled by the easy motion of the carriage, thought of her sleeping child—Lee, whom she had gained and held through suffering, her comfort for the future, her solace for disappointment. What matter whether she loved or hated the world? There were baby lips and baby fingers ready to extract the poison from every sting. She pitied the women who had only the social whirl, childless wives, satiated with pleasure, with no future of hope, no old age sustained by filial affection.

She ran up the steps. Within the vestibule stood Paul Trafford, his back against the inner door. He had taken a cab, and the slow driving of her coachman had given him time to outdistance her.

She did not know whether to be irritated or amused.

"I could not go to sleep to-night," he said, gently, "until I had seen you for a few moments alone."

His voice was carefully modulated; it had never before failed to charm her.

Perhaps she was cross; she did not know, but, somehow, she missed its customary power.

"I am so tired!" she murmured, helplessly.

"I know, I know. Don't make it hard for me," he pleaded. "I will not detain you but a moment."

He followed her into the house, up the thickly carpeted stairs into the library, where, a few hours before, she had left her husband.

She turned up the flame of the lamp until a soft, rosy glow pervaded the darkened room; then she threw herself into the chair she had so recently occupied. She hoped that he would not choose the one her husband had sat in; but, unknowingly, he did, and the incongruity of the situation irritated her rasped nerves. It was the first time in their acquaintance that Paul Trafford had ever annoyed her. She wondered idly if there had not been a time when she thought the same thing of the man she had married, and, should she marry Trafford, if she would duplicate a former experience.

"I know how you feel," he commenced. "I know that even at this moment my presence is an irritation, and you wish you were alone. It is a breach of good manners and of good taste, but sometimes a man suffers so deeply that even when he knows he is jeopardizing his chance, he has to go on, for the suspense is impossible."

She was silent. He waited for her to speak, and when she did not, a look of reproach flitted over his face; but her eyes were downcast, and she did not see.

"To-night," he went on, in a low voice, "I watched you in that crowd, and the thought came to me that there were other men now who could come to you; you were free, and I was only one among them. You could ignore the past, and I should be helpless. You are beautiful and attractive, and I feel my limitations so keenly. A man knows what to do in every crisis of life, except when that crisis relates to a woman. I knew that if I forced myself into your presence, I was weaken-

ing my slight hold upon you; if I waited, I should be, if not forgotten, ranked, and, at last, perhaps out-ranked."

She held her long, tapering fingers toward him with a graceful gesture.

"Look! those wrists have been manacled, fettered. Would you ask me to put them voluntarily into bondage again?"

"But the fetters of love are different from those of indifference—or hate."

"But they are fetters, nevertheless."

He arose from his chair. "What do you intend? I am to fall into place amid the lines of your admirers; come and go at your beck and call; wear my life out in waiting for a word that, maybe, never comes; go on suffering agonies from your caprice?"

"Yes, they were all alike," she thought, bitterly, "all alike. Underneath the thin suavity of flattery is the waiting tyrant."

He must have read in her face something that passed through her mind.

"You do not understand me, and I cannot blame you. I am not myself to-night. I don't wish to imply that I have any right. I have none but what you choose to give me. I served your need, but it was my pleasure to do so. I exact no reward."

She raised her hand suddenly. There was a sound in the room overhead.

"Hush! Lee——"

The thought of the child obtruded in his mind unpleasantly.

The sound ceased, and she turned to him, her face glorified by maternal love. "I am always worried about Lee; if he moves in his sleep, I imagine all sorts of things. It's foolish, I know, but he is all I have."

His momentary irritation was swallowed up by a deeper feeling, and by the philosophical reflection that some drawback would be necessary to balance such overpowering attractions as she possessed.

"He need not be," he commenced, hurriedly, taking advantage of the amiability which replaced her mood of

the moment before; "he need not be; I——"

The curtains were pushed aside, and the white face of a woman was thrust in. It was Lee's nurse. She beckoned Mrs. Renau, her trembling lips refusing their office. She was the embodiment of fear.

Mary Renau staggered a moment as she stood upright; then, thrusting Paul Trafford aside, as he hurried to her, she ran from the room, and flew up-stairs in the wake of the servant who preceded her swiftly.

At the top, she caught the girl by the arm. "What do you mean by running in this way? Tell me at once! Is Lee ill?"

The servant gasped, and swallowed audibly before she ejaculated:

"He's gone! he's gone! I was asleep, and just woke. I always look in once or twice during the night to see that he is all right."

"Gone!" Mary Renau stood for a moment, rigid with fright. "Gone! What do you mean? Gone!"

She did not wait to hear an answer to her question, but, pushing the woman away, she flew into Lee's sleeping-apartment. In the bed was the imprint of his tiny form, but his clothes, even his toys, had disappeared. He had not wandered in his sleep, as the nurse had first thought. He had gone—been stolen by his father.

Every drop of blood in her body seemed to beat in her head. Her hands grasped the back of the chair like the talons of a bird clutching a branch in the fury of a storm.

"Send Charles to me!"

Charles, imperturbable, scrupulously attired, as if he had anticipated her summons, stood before her.

She questioned him abruptly.

"Where is Lee?"

He glanced at the bed with as near an approach to surprise as he could simulate.

"Master Lee! He has gone?"

"You know he has gone. You probably helped—that man—to steal him—my child!"

"I did not see Mr. Renau when he

went. I said good-bye to him in the library. He sent me out of an errand, and when I came back he had left."

"How much money do you want? Tell me at once where they are, and you can name your price. I am in your power!"

"I do not know, madame, where they are, and I have no price."

There was sincerity in his voice.

"It is as I expected. You are all in league against me. Pack your things, and go at once. You can get your wages from the housekeeper. I do not wish to see your face again."

The man bowed respectfully, and went out.

Lee stolen! The whole significance of the fact could not all at once penetrate her consciousness. She remembered the threat made to her earlier in the evening. She had believed it but the vapor of a mind racked with passion. She herself had often threatened to relieve the tension of emotion.

What a fool she had been! what a fool! Where should she go? What could she do? To whom should she turn?

Then she remembered Paul Trafford, waiting in the library.

She almost fell down-stairs in her haste, her gown torn, her face flushed, her hair disarranged.

Trafford was standing in the middle of the room, his head a little bent, his hands thrust in his pockets, on his forehead the scowl of angered uncertainty.

She clutched him wildly by the arm.

"That man—that fiend," she gasped, "has stolen my child—my Lee! I shall never see my boy again. I know it, I feel it!"

For his life, he could not, master of his emotions as he usually was, prevent the feeling of relief or its outward expression.

She flung him from her with a force engendered by rage.

"You are glad! you are glad! I see it in your face!"

He tried to speak, to lie, to gain his self-control; but the piercing eyes seemed to read his soul, the selfish, calculating soul, and he could not.

"Go!" She pointed to the door, threateningly. "Not a word! I know you now. I believe all that I have heard—all that he said, the friend whom you betrayed as you would betray me if I should listen to your specious tongue. Go!"

And, as he did not move, she shrieked the words, hysterically.

"Go! go! go! Never let me hear your voice again. I am through with you!"

The lamps blazed, and finally went out. The chill dawn crept in, outlining objects with a pale significance, while she sat there, crouched in an easy-chair, her body stiff with the cold, her heart aflame with hatred and revenge.

III

GRAHAM RENAU spent the remaining months of the Winter in the South, in a quiet place near the Indian River, which fashion had overlooked, and which Northern speculators avoided, too many of them having lost capital and heart after repeated frosts and a consequent loss to their orange crops. It was filled with a small native population, and invalids.

He had changed his name to Graham, adopting the Christian for a surname and prefixing Philip to it, for no particular reason, except euphony. His departure had been rendered easy by the faithful Charles, and the start he had gained made pursuit improbable, as there was no clue to his hiding-place.

In the late Spring, he commenced a zigzagging course North, stopping at out-of-the-way towns or villages, sometimes a day, sometimes a week. At every new place, he changed his name, and sometimes doubled on his tracks. He felt like a criminal dodging pursuit, to save life or honor.

Up to a certain point, the man Charles was able to give aid, but his uneducated ability soon reached its limit. He could not find out the tactics of his former mistress, whether she

was pursuing the fugitives by the aid of the law she had scorned, or whether, wearied and capricious, as was her wont, she was trusting to chance to help her regain her child.

This absolute ignorance of her determination kept Renau constantly upset. Sometimes he fancied he was pursued, and the presentiment would send him in haste from some comfortable, if temporary, home. By his own suspicions, he created about himself an atmosphere of suspicion, and found content nowhere, except for rare moments in the society of his child.

At length, he determined to cross the ocean and seclude himself in Europe, where, in strange places and amid strange people, he might avoid the danger which seemed so imminent, so long as a railroad journey of but a few hours might upset his most careful calculations.

He telegraphed Charles in the cipher they had adopted, and a state-room was reserved for him on one of the Anchor Line steamships. He had forbidden the servant to show himself on the dock, for fear of discovery, and, reaching the steamer just at the hour of sailing, he was unaware of the fact that the faithful man was watching him from behind some bales, undeceived by his attempts at concealment, the hat pulled down over his eyes, and the child enveloped in the traveling-rug. Lonely and oppressed by the presentiment of evil, he would have welcomed the disobedience, had he known.

As soon as he was on board the ship, he hid himself in the state-room until they were far down the harbor.

He had been booked as George Phillips, and the black stripe he had adopted for the sleeve of his coat seemed to suggest an important event in his history, to explain his traveling alone with his child and to prevent conjecture.

The ten days of the trip passed quickly, and to the enervation of the months in the South, the weeks they had spent zigzagging back and forth, wearisome to body and soul alike, succeeded the inspiration of cool North-

ern breezes, the feel of the fog as they passed the Banks, the moonlight nights, the restfulness of the ocean swell, the charm of unrestrained intercourse with his fellow-men.

To Lee, the days passed in delight too ecstatic for expression. His golden curls had been cut, and his dresses succeeded by trousers ludicrous in their proportions. He was passing rapidly from the monosyllabic period of babyhood to the curiosity of the growing boy, and his erratic life gave promise of a precocious development.

Lee was a favorite on board ship, and, secure for the time from discovery, the father allowed the boy to roam quite at will, while he gave himself up to a needed rest for his tired spirit, enjoying the peace of the present, and shutting from his mind the thought of a harassed future.

They traveled leisurely through Scotland. Lee never wearied of the kilted soldiers, and, week after week, he kept his father in Edinburgh, so that every morning they could go to the old castle and watch the Gordon Highlanders drill on the open ground which slopes gently from the massive drawbridge toward St. Giles.

The caprice of the child was now their only law. Day after day, they watched the strut of the gaily attired soldiers, or, after drill, climbed the steep stairway to the big cannon, Mons Meg, to note the Calton hills bathed in their blue mist, or, in the tiny graveled enclosure at the edge of the parapet, read the inscription on the graves of the soldiers' dogs. At York, too, they lingered, so that Lee might attend evensong daily at the Minster, for a handsome chorister was for a time the idol of his life. In the intervals, they would walk about the big wall encircling the city, and the child, with string and bent pin, would fish in the placid waters of the Ouse.

Little by little, they approached London, from which place Graham Renau intended to communicate with his lawyers, and ascertain what his former wife had determined to do. If he found that she had quietly ac-

cepted the inevitable, he planned to make his own preparations accordingly.

He secured some quiet lodgings, and hired a sturdy girl as nurse-maid. She had instructions never to allow Lee to talk to strange people; never to allow any one, under pain of instant dismissal, to question him. Yet, even with these precautions, he never saw Lee go for his daily exercise alone with her, that he did not feel a tremor of dread. At length, so paralyzing did this uncertainty become that he would not allow Lee to go out unless he followed at a distance. More frequently, he dismissed the maid for the morning or afternoon, as the case might be, and took Lee to the hippodrome, to the museums, picture-galleries or parks.

Always, in the crowd, he was looking ahead, careless of present danger, of insolent cabbies who cracked their whips at him as he crossed their paths. Often, at the very door of a place of amusement, he would turn away, overcome by the presentiment of coming evil to his child, and, unheeding Lee's cry of disappointment, would change his plan and his direction. Peace he knew no more.

The letters from his lawyers gave him no encouragement. The best they could do was to advise him to remain in Europe and take his chances of eluding discovery. In the eyes of the law, he had abducted the child, and could be held responsible. The daily papers had at length wormed the meat of the situation from vague stories, and portraits of his divorced wife, of himself and the child embellished several editions. The quiet of a small place was fraught with the danger of intimacies with his neighbors and the insatiate curiosity of provincial life. Only in a city did he feel safe, and that safety depended solely on the opportunity it afforded him to change his place of concealment hurriedly, if occasion required.

Hunted and haunted, he had exchanged a life of domestic strife for one of wearisome concealment, in which

the worst element was the knowledge that his fears were, perhaps, chimerical; perhaps his wife had given up all desire for her child or, in newer excitements, for revenge.

Her silence perplexed and irritated him. His lawyers had attempted to interview her, but had been repulsed. A letter entrusted to them, in which he had humiliated himself to the point of suggesting a compromise, had been returned unopened. Her plans were a sealed book.

Moreover, he was an example of the corroding power of parental egotism. He seemed to have lost all sense of responsibility. The very fact of the dangers and humiliations from which he suffered made him idolize his boy the more. He had sacrificed everything, even his peace of mind. He had lost all regard for the large proportion of duties which life held for him. His professional career, his citizenship, his other ties of family and kindred were as nothing to him—less than nothing. He lived for Lee alone.

He was a keen observer, and would have been quick to criticize this form of selfishness in another. He would have ruthlessly pointed out that life was never intended to focus at one point, even when that one point happens to be a man's own flesh and blood.

One night, leaving Lee asleep and the faithful nurse on watch, he went out into the streets. Chance took him to the Embankment, and, after watching the traffic on the bridge, the outlines of the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament silhouetted against the starlit sky, and the shadows of moving hulks in the river below, he turned his steps toward a near-by hotel. He wanted to see his kind; to watch, from a distance, the busy American tourist, overflowing with enthusiasm, who had "done" the sights of London in twenty-four hours; who had visited St. Paul's, the National Galleries, the Tower, the British Museum, and could talk of their glories more fluently than the custodians. He felt depressed; he was, in reality, homesick, but he would have scorned such an insinuation.

The thought occurred to him that he might see some one of his club or business friends there, some man too interested in his own affairs to be curious, with whom he might chat for half an hour concerning the events which were moving the surface of American life. Luck was with him, and, in the smoking-room of the Cecil, he met just the man he desired, a bright, chatty fellow, filled to the brim with the latest gossip, social, commercial and political, a man too engrossed in his own affairs, which were manifold and important, to do more than recollect Renau's story and to be satisfied with the latter's announcement that he was "passing through London."

It was late when he said good-bye to this friend, and, unthinkingly, he wandered into the Oriental room, where after-theatre parties were taking coffee. There were several groups scattered about. For a moment, the dim lights, the rhythm of concealed music, the sway and swing of perfumed draperies, bewildered him. It was the first time for months that he had seen the fashionable world. He scanned each group listlessly; the carelessness of his masculine acquaintance in regard to his story, the relegation of his affairs to the background of their talk, had forced him to the momentary conclusion that he had overrated their importance, and that he was in reality forgotten—a nine days' wonder sunk into oblivion.

This belief almost proved his undoing. A high-pitched voice smote his ears suddenly, and the words penetrated his consciousness, while he turned, involuntarily. His wife stood facing him, talking to a group among whom he noticed a young woman who had been a mutual friend of theirs for many years.

The words he heard were, "No, I am not here for pleasure. I have not given up the search. I shall never relinquish it until I have accomplished my purpose."

Their eyes met, and, after the first surprise, she shrieked his name, and almost fell toward him.

Either by accident or design, the young woman friend stooped to pick her handkerchief from the floor, and her rapid counter movement, checking his wife's advance, made his own escape possible.

So she was here, on his track, and the words she had uttered destroyed forever any doubts he might have had as to her intentions. It was as he surmised; in the high-pitched tones, tense with passion, he recognized a fundamental truth—that she would accept no compromise; that she would fight for her child to the bitter end.

It is not an easy thing to break a law, albeit that law may work injustice. The end may justify the means, but the means lead through noisome paths. He felt discouraged, heartsick.

Was he to lose in the game, after all? No; he set his lips firmly, as he had set them the night he had stolen Lee. He threw himself into a cab, and told the driver to go quickly—anywhere. They drove through the streets for an hour. At the end of that time, he alighted about a mile from his lodging-house, and even then, fearful of an encounter with some sly-faced detective, returned by circuitous ways, looking furtively up and down the street where he resided before he dared enter it, and, reassured at length, crept, like a thief, to his room.

Father and son stayed in seclusion several days, then took the night train to Dover, and crossed the Channel. They did not go direct to Paris, but loitered in several villages of Normandy; but here, as elsewhere, the serenity of the villagers, where each arrival stirred the pool of provincial curiosity, the intimacies thrust upon him, usually through the medium of Lee's cheerful camaraderie, acted as a *vis a tergo* to urge him again to the metropolitan centre, where, in the crowd, he could better hope to elude a possible discovery. Chance had helped him in actual danger because he had been able to tire pursuit; but in a smaller place such an escape would be impossible.

There was something about the pen-

sion in the rue Leo Délibes, that immediately appealed to him. It had an indefinable atmosphere of repose. The dark wainscotings, the big rooms, the old-fashioned furniture, the air of decayed gentility, speaking everywhere of more prosperous fortunes, of a house fallen from its great estate, charmed him. He felt cloistered and immune from the world.

He followed Madame Lisle up one flight of stairs to the salon, where they discussed terms, extras of wine, service, candles, etc., while his mind was far away. He had found another oasis, but around him was the desert. How soon, like Ishmael, would he have to brave its uncharted dangers again?

Their room looked out on the courtyard, where the trellises were covered with roses, and the tiny daughter of the *concierge* sat with a balloon from which the air had escaped, and murmured, softly, conscious of their scrutiny: "*Il est mort; il est mort.*"

Lee saw in her a new sweetheart, and was immediately enchanted. In the near distance, the Tour d'Eiffel stood out in bold relief against the Summer sky. It was the year of the Exposition, and Paris, ever gay, was redecked and renewed.

The wife of the *concierge* promised to look after Lee with her own children, but Renau left him seldom. Sometimes at night, he would go out for a solitary ramble, but usually they went together, always in a *fiacre*, up and down the Champs Elysées, to the Bois, occasionally to the Exposition, Lee absorbed in its marvels, while he watched the faces of the passers-by; sometimes they would ride up and down the Seine, so that Lee could enjoy the picture of Vieux Paris which had such a vague, dreamlike charm.

The guests of the *pension* were the usual motley crowd of the Continental boarding-house. There were the young English couple, just married, the bride, shy and drait, the groom dignified and master of a trying situation; some young American girls under the chaperronnage of an older woman whose profession was that of European courier;

a provincial German who spent his days buying weird productions at the Street-of-All-Nations, and at nightfall exhibited them with pride to those assembled at the table; some relatives of Madame Lisle; Frenchwomen of uncertain age, who knew only their own language and watched suspiciously, as if fearful that their appearance had suggested the occasional laugh; an elderly lady of rather distinguished mien, who dressed always in heavy brocades and massive jewels; and with her, a younger woman, plainly garbed, whose manner of respectful attention and forced cheerfulness betrayed the poor relative in the rôle of companion.

This younger woman interested Graham Renau, now Edward Searles. She seemed to him, like the house in which they dwelt, to have been diverted, by some caprice of fate, from an intended use. She had at times the look of resignation which comes with ambitions sacrificed to need. In her brown eyes were pathetic lights and shades; her voice low, unassertive, marked a soul which had been too badly hurt in its youth to recuperate.

Their conversation at first amounted only to the casual greetings of a *table-d'hôte*, but by degrees they began to talk of the Exposition, the extortions of Paris cab-drivers and other moth-eaten subjects.

One night, when the German was proudly showing an immense table-cover of green felt, appliquéd with elephants of red, their eyes met, and in their mutual appreciation of the situation their souls seemed to have leaped, all at once, the barriers of ignorance, and to have come very near each other.

Often, he would meet her at nightfall, walking hurriedly in the neighborhood of the house; and, later, he learned that these solitary walks, when her feet seemed hardly to touch the ground, were her only safety-valves of emotion, when the insolences and exactions of her aunt had become insupportable. He pitied her, and she pitied him for his fears in regard to his

child, for his loneliness, for the moods of bitter thought shown in his face and in his moments of abstraction.

If pity be not always akin to love, it is nearly always to confession, and, one night, she told him her story. No flowers of rhetoric or of sentiment embellished its bald facts. She had been left an orphan at an early age, unfitted by experience or temperament to cope with the world. A great-aunt had taken her to preserve the family name from the stain of a possible humiliation, and since then her life had been a slavery, her independence crushed, her girlhood wiped out. Even the gaiety of youth, that quality so hard to crush, had been effectually annihilated in her. She looked upon life in a somber, resentful way, feeling that she had been side-tracked through no fault of her own; that fate had played her false, not even giving her that chance for happiness which seems the inalienable right of every human soul.

They lived here and there, wherever the caprice of the older woman led them, their existence filled with pitiful economies, so that the prestige of a name, in which no one but themselves was interested, might be saved from ridicule. Her aunt's annuity died with her, and the girl's future stretched before her, blacker, if that were possible, than her present.

Later, he told her his own story, concealing nothing, not even the conviction that he had not been blameless in his married life. He described his wanderings, the fears and anxieties that made his life unendurable, the uncertainties in regard to his child's future—all the miserable tale, so pitiful in the telling, so pathetic in its realities.

He felt better after his confession. Her light touch, if it did not lift the weight of the burden he had fitted to his back, helped him to adjust it more enduringly. Her wordless sympathy encouraged him. Meeting her brown eyes across the table at their early *déjeuner*, usually taken together, he felt less friendless and alone.

He knew, too, that without making

any dramatic offer of help, Lee was seldom out of her sight, and that, to the careless supervision of the *concierge's* wife, was added her appreciation of the peculiar situation of affairs. Knowing this, he allowed himself an occasional liberty, and renewed his acquaintance with the Paris of his early manhood. So the days passed.

One afternoon, he and Lee were returning home, enjoying the street panorama, the ceaseless moving of cabs, the holiday crowd, the top-heavy trams, the ever-changing color and life of the open. They turned leisurely into the avenue Kléber, on their way to the *pension*. Across the street a woman beckoned to him furtively from a *fiacre*. It was his friend, Lucie Browning. She stepped out, and drew him to one side. "I have been waiting for you a half-hour. She is here, in the salon."

As she told him this, breathlessly, she thrust a time-table into his hand. "See, you can just get a train. Telegraph Madame Lisle to have your things sent to the Gare du Nord, and then I will forward them; send my letter poste restante, with directions. Don't stop to thank me."

She hurried Lee into her *fiacre*. "Quick. Every moment is precious."

She shook hands with him; heard him give instructions to the *cocher*, and the latter crack his whip; noted Lee's white face, not understanding why he was leaving his friend Lucie and his little sweetheart of the *pension*. She saw Graham Renau raise his hat, his face eloquent with gratitude, and then they were lost sight of, while she turned sadly back, desolate before, doubly desolate now that she had voluntarily removed from her life the one person who had made her forget its sorrow.

IV

ON reaching the house, Lucie had scarcely rung the bell, which clanged musically along the empty corridor, when the *concierge's* wife shuffled across the stone floor to open the door. Usu-

ally, Lucie had to wait the woman's slow convenience.

"It seems he's married, after all," she volunteered, in the guttural French of the provinces.

"Married? Of whom are you speaking?" asked Lucie, impatiently. But the woman, overflowing with the importance of the situation, did not notice her mild irritation.

"Monsieur Searles," she half-whispered. "He's not a widower. Oh, these men!" And her little, dark eyes looked at Lucie keenly. "Not a widower, for all the black stripe on his coat and the look of woe. They're all alike, ma'm'selle; all wolves in sheep's clothing."

"How do you know he is not a widower?" asked Lucie, breaking in, her foot on the lower step and her dress in her hand, ready for the ascent. She was anxious to hear what the woman had to say; what the gossip of the house had grown into, during the last hour; what danger there still was, or what safety, for the two whom she thought of as her charges.

"She's up there," and the woman pointed a finger, significantly. "She came just before you went out. She's a beauty." And again her eyes glanced shrewdly at Lucie's faded face and slender figure, garbed in its unbecoming gown. "How could a man be cruel to such a handsome woman as that? But they're all alike, all alike, ma'm'selle, believe me. I've been three times married. The good God preserve me from a fourth husband!"

Lucie interrupted again; she had heard all this before. "You mean his wife is here—are you sure she is his wife? You must have misunderstood."

"I heard her tell Madame Lisle. Any one could have heard. I was not listening. You know I never listen," she murmured, in justification. "She stood in the salon, with the door open, and talked and talked and talked. She's come for the child, it seems. It belongs to her. The law gave it." The woman's voice gained volume. "They've been divorced, and he ran away with the boy. She's going

to take him now; she's got her papers, and there's a lawyer waiting at the Ritz if there's trouble."

Lucie lowered her head that she might hide the flush of joy which suddenly illumined her face. Already she hated the woman in the room above—hated her without ever having laid eyes upon her. She had the intense passions of the recluse, hidden under the crust of daily discipline, passions which, when they break through, astonish by their fervor.

"It is very interesting," she answered the woman, "very interesting. We shall miss them."

She ran hurriedly up the stairs, and when she reached the door of the little salon where madame received her guests, and where the inmates of the *pension* were accustomed to meet and chat, she glanced within, then walked boldly forward.

In the centre of the room sat a very handsome young woman, elegantly gowned, her face surrounded by an aureole of fluffy hair. But the face itself was marked by the lines of irritation, anxiety and a lack of self-control. Her foot was beating the faded carpet impatiently, and her eyes wandered restlessly from the picture of the landlady's husband, surrounded by its wreath of beads, to the *étagère* laden with inexpensive articles which seemed to have recently worn the tags marked, "*prix du jour*;" then to the centre-table heaped with photographs of the Arc du Triomphe, Napoleon's Tomb, Le Tour d'Eiffel, designed for the needs of American visitors.

Opposite the stranger sat Madame Lisle, looking as if the situation had completely overpowered her. She was used to the eccentricities of the trans-Atlantic woman; nothing she did ever surprised her. The books she read, the places she visited, the freedom with which she met the opposite sex—all had been accepted as a necessary part of her fallen fortunes; but this was the first time that scandal had invaded her home. She looked up with an expression of relief at Lucie's entrance.

"Oh, Miss Browning," she said, explanatorily, "it seems that Mr. Searles is married, after all. This is his wife." She waved her hand dramatically toward the visitor, to whom, for the time being, the *pension*, its owner and inmates seemed to have been subordinated.

"Was his wife," the stranger corrected. "Thank heaven, I am so no longer. That man"—and on the word all the hatred of months seemed to be concentrated—"has stolen my child. He has no more right to him than you have." She was looking at Lucie, and designated her as she might have designated a chair or a table.

"I am very sorry," murmured Lucie, softly; sorry for what or for whom she did not say, and the two women could not know that her sympathy was no idle word, but enveloped her thought of the wanderers whom she had saved from the wrath of her vis-à-vis.

Lucie's personality did not particularly interest Mary Renau, but she was another safety-valve for her emotion, and she talked to her hysterically of her quest. She was apparently determined that in this quiet home where her former husband had sheltered himself, she would show him in his true colors, a man without principle, a law-breaker, a worthless member of society.

Lucie listened patiently. More and more her sympathy was aroused for the absent. To her, Graham Renau was the embodiment of all virtues, and the bitter phrases of his former wife could not destroy that belief. He was to her what some favorite saint is to the convent-dweller.

Yet the beauty of the other woman made her own insignificance the more pronounced. How could any man who had loved such a creature condescend to her plain face, her unattractive personality? What had she to offer one who had possessed the best? She felt stifled by her thoughts. Life had seemed dreary to her before; there had been a brief moment illumined by a ray of hope; now, as she gazed at the woman before her, that

dim ray died out, faded into the utter darkness of finality.

She excused herself with a few conventional words, and went up-stairs, where querulous complaints awaited her, charges of ingratitude, hints of revenge for the wasted hour, biting words only stilled when Lucie briefly detailed the tragedy of the day.

Meanwhile, the wanderers were speeding away. Graham Renau had not known where to go, but, as he looked about the waiting-room of the huge station, and noticed the glaring posters advertising special trips, the thought occurred to him that he would go to Oberammergau. He would join the band of pilgrims, who, by thousands, were wending their way toward that quiet little village in the Bavarian Alps whence a hundred hiding points in the mountains round about offered shelter. For the time being the village would be metropolitan in its activity and its forgetfulness; amid the crowds gathered there, constantly coming and going, it would no doubt be easy to find security. He was sure, too, that it would be the last place that would suggest itself to the imagination of Lee's mother, the last place that would possess any attraction for herself, independent of her search.

He had, thanks to Lucie Browning, gained a good start. Hours must elapse before his absence would become known. He was secure, for the time, from pursuit. The station had been too crowded for his insignificant disappearance to have been marked. He was safe, a little while, even from the surveillance of detectives, who believed that he was at last run to earth.

He leaned back against the cushions of his compartment, and watched the rapidly fleeing landscape. His thoughts were less with the woman whom he had thwarted than with the woman who had helped him in his hour of need. He wished that there were something he could do for her, something tangible, conclusive; but the disappearing miles made even the offer of friendship a futile thing. How could

he hope to be friends with a young woman, when the exigencies of his life might prevent his ever seeing her again? How could he help one so proud and self-contained, who had been forced to subordinate all personal needs and all desires? He sighed deeply. It was impossible for him to have outside interests in his present existence; even the friendship of a good woman was denied him. He drew Lee toward him suddenly, and enfolded him passionately in encircling arms. He had Lee—only Lee, but he wanted no one else.

They stayed for a while in Munich. The city was *en fête* for visiting Royalty; the soldiers were marching, the houses decorated, processions, religious and secular, were the established rule; one could not turn a corner without encountering some parade. Lee, with the child's delight in the present, soon forgot his little sweetheart of the *pension* in the rue Leo Délibes, and drove or walked about with his father, oblivious of all but the sunny days, the quaint houses decorated with sprawling signs, the gardens where the bands played, the wonderful, silent pictures in the galleries, and the still more wonderful moving pictures in the streets. His expletives of delight were conglomerate. Sometimes he would prattle in French, with an occasional German word; sometimes in English; sometimes in a jargon unintelligible, which he had formed himself. He was a cosmopolitan of tender years. His roots had been torn from their native soil, and transplanted frequently. He had gained an exotic growth, perilous in its suggestion of delicacy.

When they reached Oberammergau, they found the station a mob of chattering tourists, looking for lost couriers, for friends or baggage. But the holiday atmosphere prevailed, and the irritation was but the inevitable reaction from the heat of the crowded cars. Soon would the wonderful atmosphere of peace, the product of centuries of devotion to an ideal, envelop the newcomers. The big cross on Mount Kotel,

outlined against the sky, met the eye as a benediction.

They lodged in one of the peasants' houses—a tiny, pink-tinted cottage, with tracings of green on the façade—the Bavarian door-plate. In the room below them, they could hear the cattle lowing at daybreak; mountain ivy, gathered with the dew on it, covered the white-washed walls, and bunches of mountain flowers were placed every morning in their apartments. Neatness and simplicity reigned. For the first time they were in a provincial place without meeting provincial curiosity.

On the days of performances they witnessed some part of the wonderful play, sitting for hours enchanted with the merely spectacular effects, vagrant bits of color, the magenta of Christ's scarf in the scene of the Last Supper, the yellow of Judas's robe, the scarlet drapery and the green scepter as the young lad, the adored Anton Lang, descended the steps from Pilate's house.

At nightfall, they would join the motley throng which crowded the crooked streets, where Royalty and citizen rubbed shoulders; where Russian, Teuton, American, Armenian or Tyrolese wandered and wondered. It was like a Mecca pilgrimage, or that of Lourdes.

But the spectacle, day after day, of the marvelous play, the sight of lives given up entirely to the attainment of an ideal; the power and serenity of these lives; the knowledge that those who came to scoff remained to pray—the stupendous meaning, not only of what it taught, but of what it represented, became at last insupportable. Graham Renau could stand it no longer. It brought him face to face with questions which he could not answer, duties whose ghosts he dared not meet. One must have peace within to witness the Passion Play, or one is torn by conflict. It is a spectacle for those whose creeds are well established, whose lives are harmonious; it is not for the tempest-tossed.

So, unheeding the remonstrance of Lee, who had become enamoured of a

young Tyrolese who kept a small shop of souvenirs, they left Oberammergau for Meerane. There, where others sought the health of the body, Graham Renau designed to find a cure for his weakened spirit.

But a new problem awaited him. Lee, whose young life had been drawn to too tight a tension, suddenly developed a strange restlessness. He slept badly; his appetite failed, and his eyes grew so big that his face seemed but a tiny frame. He had seen and done overmuch. The constant flights, the recurrent changes of scene, the lack of harmony so necessary to a child's well-being, had accomplished their work. When he reached Meerane, he collapsed.

And then, forgetful of his own needs, his racked soul and the endless problems his mind offered for solution, Graham Renau devoted himself exclusively to his boy. He had a new dread—that he might lose the child, not by the power of the law he had defied, but by the power of that higher law whose claims cannot be ignored. Often he would waken from sleep, the fear which he had thrust from him in the daytime overmastering him, and could rest again only when Lee's deep breathing assured him of the boy's safety.

They stayed in the mountains until the cold weather came; and then, by slow stages, returned, stopping at Munich again. Later on, they reached Florence, where they stayed for a while; then they pressed on once more to the Riviera. Again the changes of scenes and people wore perceptibly on the child. Every new habit, every new intimacy of place or person, sapped his vitality. He seemed not only too precocious for his years, but too sad. All the dainty gaiety of his youthfulness was lost. All the pretty tricks of childhood, its inconsequence, its uncertainties, were replaced by a maturity of look and action sadly out of keeping with his form and face. His father was at his wits' end. Every hour seemed to have its pang of uncertainty and of dread.

He felt that something must be done, and done at once. His patience seemed to be approaching its limit of endurance. What was going to break? His will, his child's health? Or would fate, as it sometimes did in crucial moments, offer a compromise?

Fate did! One day he came into their sitting-room, and found Lee asleep on the floor. He had taken a pillow from the couch and thrown himself down, as if careless of comfort. His little face was marked by paths of tears. Something had gone wrong. What was it? What sorrow was imprinted on the childish countenance? All at once he woke, and looked his father in the eyes. For a second the latter was reminded of that evening, long ago, when the child had waked with that same suddenness, the night of the abduction, and had smilingly raised himself into the waiting arms.

Lee did not smile now or demand the paternal embrace. Instead, he looked at his father for a long time, silently, reproachfully.

"What is it, Lee?" Renau asked, at length, unable to bear longer the mute look of despair. "What is it, my boy?"

The tears rained down the uplifted face. "I don't know, I don't know!" he sobbed, incoherently; and then, as if a thought which had sought expression before had all at once overcome the barrier of helplessness and become articulate, "I want a mama! I want a mama! Won't you give me one? All the children here have mamas!"

Yes, fate, with Lee for a mouth-piece, had suggested a compromise. He did not want his own mother, whose personality was swallowed up in the mists of forgetfulness which border childhood, but *any* mother. It was the woman nature he needed, the feminine care; some one to whom he really belonged, not the oversight of a hireling. This was the underlying secret of his ill-health.

Graham Renau's thoughts moved with lightning celerity to Lucie Browning. He wondered if she were still in

Paris. He would write that day, and find out. What a mother she would make for Lee, so gentle, so thoughtful, so kind! He had sacrificed so much to his child that the habit of self-immolation had become fixed. That he was giving up his last hold on freedom never weighed with him for a moment against the fear of Lee's ill-health, or the sub-conscious dread that, some time, wearied by mental importunities, he might be forced to relinquish the child to the guardian the law had appointed.

Yes, Lucie Browning could save him and save Lee. He felt sure of this. The old days in the French *pension* returned to him. He felt again the restful security when, with Lucie to watch, he had, for the first time since the beginning of their wanderings, left his boy without a terror of the expected.

Lucie Browning was not in Paris. She was in London, and his letter was forwarded to her there. She wrote that they would soon be in Genoa, where they were to meet some relatives, and sail immediately for New York. His letter had been indefinite in its phrasing, but one could read clearly between the lines that he was in trouble, and needed her.

When she wrote that they were to embark immediately after reaching Italy, he felt strangely depressed. Perhaps he was too late. Perhaps the friendship she had shown him had become weakened by absence. A hundred things might have happened.

He was pale and tense when he confronted her on the esplanade where she had agreed to meet him. Lee was in the hotel, under the care of a nurse-maid, and he had stolen this hour. She, too, was paler, more quiet and reserved than usual. He wasted no time in trivialities. The months of absence, instead of alienating them, seemed to have brought them to a fuller comprehension of each other.

"It is for the boy, Lucie," he ended his plea, "that I ask this. I know that you love him; that you will be good and true to him and to me. That is

why I ask you to be my wife. I can offer you all but the one thing—the one thing which is beyond our power to control; that is dead in me long ago, but there are gratitude, respect, admiration, care for you and your future awaiting your decision. Will you give yourself to Lee—and to me?"

She could not restrain a feeling of bitterness, even now, when her prayer was answered.

This, she thought, wearily, was life's gift to her in compensation for her years of suffering—a husband and no love, a home without the one foundation that makes it secure.

Before meeting him, she had had it in her power to go on with the old life, to accept the unpleasant duties entailed by the increasing infirmities of her aunt; but, at the spoken word, at the touch of his hand on hers, she reached suddenly the point where her will was dominated by her desires, where the strength of daily habit became inert and helpless.

She would marry Graham Renau. The alternative was too weak to weigh for one moment in the scales. She had, as has been stated, the passions of the recluse—passions which know no compromise.

They met again later in the day, and matured their plans. Lucie did not dare tell her aunt of her decision; she did not dare mention Graham Renau's name, for the *esclandre* in the Paris *pension* was still a subject for almost daily reproach. In some inexplainable way, her aunt held her guilty for the whole affair, for his early marriage, his divorce, the abduction of the child and the wife's disarrangement of the quiet of the Paris *pension*.

It was decided that Lucie should go on board the steamer, having made all her preparations for flight; that, at the last moment, ostensibly on the plea of looking after the baggage, she should leave the ship, and, as soon as the steamer was on its way, the purser would deliver the letter announcing her plans to her aunt.

It was not without bitter tears that Lucie consented to this. The

knowledge that she was breaking away from the bonds of quiet habit into the turmoil of an unknown life, the thought of duties swept aside so lightly when her whole life hitherto had been one great renunciation of self, the horror at that self's abnormal strength, when, after its years of repression, it was given place, frightened her. There was no tie of affection binding her to the woman who had made her life so miserable, but there were the ties of habit, of kindred, of duty.

But she pushed these weakening thoughts aside. She had determined to grasp the half-good life offered, but the grasp hurt her.

She made her preparations in accordance with their plans. Her aunt was more difficult than ever on the morning of sailing, and ignored Lucie's efforts to render the embarkation easy. Her querulous criticisms, her biting sarcasms, her charges of inattention and ingratitude rendered their last moments together doubly unpleasant. It was not difficult for Lucie to slip away, unobserved, for the old lady soon inveigled one of the stewardesses into her state-room, and transferred her abuse to the new-comer. When she remembered Lucie, it was too late; the steamer was far out in the bay.

Graham Renau and Lucie watched it depart, until the cloud of smoke became a faintly traced line of dun against the brilliant sky.

V

LEE accepted the presence of a new mother as a matter of course. To him, she meant another playfellow with unflagging zeal in devising methods of amusement. The maternal instinct needs no development in some women. Lucie Browning was of this class. She regulated Lee's diet and his hours of sleep. She made many changes in regard to his clothing. She found inexhaustible ways of keeping him amused. She held sickness at bay by prevention, and soon, under her care, he became rugged and happy, his

physical and mental states corresponding in perfect harmony. In a word, she gave him everything but love.

She had lost her parents at so early an age that she had retained no distinct impression regarding them. Neither in childhood nor in youth had she possessed a friend. Her martyrdom with her aunt had effectually destroyed the tendrils of budding affection which, in the young, spring out and wind themselves about the first object at hand, no matter how unworthy that object may be.

Until she met Graham Renau, she had never dreamed of the possibility of love as a factor in her life; after that meeting, love became suddenly dominant, and her life a subordinate issue. She enveloped him, from the beginning, in an atmosphere which effectually concealed his true nature. It was composed of many elements — the dreams of youth, its hopes, fears and ambitions, which had so nearly died of inanition in her maiden heart. She had no method of comparison, for he was the only man with whom she had passed the barrier of formalities. She was like one of the women of the Middle Ages, whom history depicts, looking upon the husbands chosen for them, or by whom they were chosen, as lesser gods, never questioning their rights or their conduct, accepting them as masters of their destinies, and content with a blind hero-worship. But she was too clear-sighted to be mistaken for one moment in regard to his feeling toward her. Never did she class the lukewarm sentiment that he displayed with the passion that seethed in herself and, beneath the nun-like exterior, kept soul and heart in turmoil. She accepted his respect, his friendship, his gratitude; in return, she gave him the ardent adoration that the captive gives his savior.

Like the miser who treasures his one piece of gold, who cannot be duped by a counterfeit, clever though it may be, so she was never deceived even by a temporary warmth of manner into believing that her husband had ever offered her his best. But she hoped;

else her life would have been impossible. The mere fact that there was something beyond sustained her in the dark hours which came, now and then, when she thought of the duties she had relinquished, of the real desolation of the existence that seemed, to a superficial observer, to possess much of interest.

And with Graham Renau, the fact that he had not deceived her with phrases of love and promises of undying affection; that he had taken her from a life of dependence and unhappiness, to give her affection, respect, a luxurious home and creature comforts, seemed to him sufficient. He felt no vulnerable point in the armor of his satisfaction.

Of the fact that she loved him blindly, passionately, he was not ignorant. This knowledge irked him. He would have preferred the lukewarm sentiment of a friendship like his own; yet, on the other hand, he rejoiced in it, for it bound her more closely to his interests and to those of the child. She would make a better mother for Lee, so he argued, because of her affection for him, and to that extent only was he pleased with her constant self-betrays, which the long habit of control was powerless to amend.

He gave her what he could, but that was little, viewed from the standpoint of one to whom the external was nothing, the feeling all. He had loved once and been disappointed, and he did not believe it possible that he could ever love again.

They spent the remainder of the Winter on the Riviera, at Bordighera, Mentone, Monte Carlo. They were careful watchers, and there seemed no reason to believe that they were under surveillance. The presence of Lucie would in itself help to avert suspicion, for the fact of his second marriage could not have become known.

Lee had grown out of recognition, not only in appearance, but in manners, and his speech was that of a foreign-born child. Graham Renau himself had altered greatly; he wore his hair and beard in the French fashion,

and the trio spoke French always in public with a purity of accent that would suggest a Gallic nationality.

They made few friends. Lucie had never formed the habit of quick acquaintance, and Renau had become indifferent. He loved nature and his books. He took long, solitary walks, or escorted his wife and child to various places of interest round about. Their days were placid ones, but underneath was forming a torrent that would some time break through the crust, and threaten their safety in a way little dreamed of by the man who had imagined that his sacrifice and forethought had averted the only real danger to his peace of mind.

In the Spring they went to Versailles, and hired a villa. It was a charming place, with ample grounds, where flowers rioted, where Lee kept chickens and ducks; Lucie became a person of importance, superintending the affairs of the home, and managing the servants. They seemed for the first time to have taken root, and Lee's joy knew no bounds. His days were spent in endless ecstasies; feathers and fluff absorbed him to the exclusion of everything. He lived out of doors, and with his little playfellows, whom he had gathered about him, loved and ruled and overran the house and garden in moods of wildest mirth. His health was no longer a matter of concern.

They kept the names by which they had been known on the Riviera, and were called Monsieur and Madame Lance. They exchanged a few formal calls with their hospitable neighbors, and a few formal dinners. Lucie made a most admirable housekeeper. She had learned the value of money and the pleasure of little economies, and, though her experience had been limited, she had the housewife's instinct, as she had the maternal.

So the hours passed, uncalendared, one so like another that they had often to stop and ask the day of the week or the month, as a stream runs over the smooth pebbles of its bed, unnoting the rock ahead which is going to divert its course.

One Sunday, the three had been to the palace to see the fountains play, and, wandering in the direction of the Trianon, Lee suddenly slipped from their side in chase of one of his chums whom he espied far off. When they at length found him, he was in conversation with a sleek, dapper little man, who spoke with the exaggerated gestures of the middle-class. Lee had been expressly forbidden to talk to strangers, and seemed bewildered when they beckoned him. The man had caught him by the arm, he explained, and had asked him all sorts of questions—where he lived, who his father was, and how long they had been at Versailles. He had tried to break away, but, finding that impossible, had submitted to the catechism. He was badly frightened, for he was always excitable, and the unexpected had power to break his calm.

Under other circumstances, Graham Renau would have followed the man and held him accountable, but he did not dare. What did that questioning portend? Were they traced, at length, after all these months of security? He knew the characteristics of the French detective; sooner or later, he would run his prey to earth. He did not tell Lucie his fears, but she read them in his eyes. The next morning, they saw the same man passing leisurely by the villa, up one side of the road, down the other, keeping a watchful eye on it, as if so sure of his game that he could play with it as a cat with the mouse which she has finally caught.

That afternoon, they went, as usual, for their daily outing. They drove about the streets a little, then toward St. Cloud, their forced smiles and idle talk hiding design. When the *fiacre* returned, Graham Renau came back to a desolate house. He had sent Lucie and Lee away, and had returned alone to close up his affairs, pay his rent, turn over the key to the agent, and, after a suitable interval, travel in a contrary direction to join his wife and child, when time enough had elapsed to promise a temporary security.

Lee cried, at intervals, through the

night, in the uncomfortable *wagon-lit*. He had secured a newly hatched chicken, and had wrapped it in his handkerchief; but the little creature lived only a few hours, and Lee's heart seemed crushed by his first view of death.

Graham Renau went to Paris in a few days, and lived there the life of his bachelor days. He mingled with the world, he dined in public places, he made friends at his hotel, and finally joined a cosmopolitan club. He hoped in this way to tire out the patience of his spies.

He had given Lucie instructions to move from place to place, and, under various names, unimportant to catalogue, receive her mail at the poste restante. He crossed the Channel once or twice, stayed a day or two in London each time, and then returned. These were desultory trips, without any apparent object.

The third time, he went down to Surrey, rented a country house which he had seen advertised, put a caretaker in it, and again withdrew. After a while, the trio met there, Lucie and Lee having come by circuitous paths, doubling on their tracks, changing their names and avoiding always any but the most conventional and formal intercourse with strangers.

Lucie Browning had been brought up in an atmosphere of the strictest integrity. Whatever faults the aunt might have, insincerity could not be numbered among them. She had the horror of a lie, not only a direct lie, but its innumerable evasions—the so-called white lies of the world. She had the virtues enjoined by the ten commandments, and none others, but those virtues she had implanted in Lucie's soul by fear, by habit and by example.

The hours she passed now seemed to her the most repugnant period of her life. The years with her aunt had not been happy ones, but their unhappiness was of a passive kind. These days were actively miserable. She was living a lie. Every time she changed her name, every time she avoided questions, or answered them by evasions, every time

she was forced to satisfy Lee for the absence of his father, their peculiar methods of life, their different nomenclatures, she experienced a moral revulsion.

The fascination of Graham Renau's presence was removed. She could look facts in the face, and she knew, though she had before been blind, that a passive unhappiness is better than its active counterpart. She was not one who could be satisfied with husks. She wanted little from life. Pretty clothes and a luxurious environment did not appeal to her as they did to many of her sex. She wanted love. Her whole nature was starving for it. She *must* have it. It was the need of it which had driven her to turn her back on the duty which was so plainly marked out for her; it was the hope of its final attainment which upheld her, during her absence from her husband, as it had during the months they had lived together. She had accepted, uncomplainingly, her position as housewife and nurse-maid, as she bitterly termed her wifehood and motherhood, in her self-communings, believing always that she would end by gaining her husband's love. But every day she seemed farther and farther away from the goal.

It was during their migratory flight, while Graham Renau remained in Paris, that Lucie came face to face with the truth in regard to her feeling toward Lee. Hitherto, she had never dared give her thought wing and space.

She had never loved him, for he was another woman's child, and his presence was a constant reminder of the fact that what her husband denied her he had given another woman. She felt an affection for him, it is true, a mild affection, the result of custom, helplessness and the fact that, as he was her husband's child, to that extent he had a claim upon her better self.

Separated from her husband on the child's account, she found new problems for solution, and came to the point where she acknowledged that Lee's presence chafed her; that it was a restraint instead of a joy. It was

Lee, it is true, who had made her Graham Renau's wife; but it was Lee who was keeping them apart. It was Lee, and Lee alone, so she believed, who prevented her love from reaping the harvest of reciprocal attachment.

When they met in the Surrey home, and took up their new lives with that facility which is the distinguishing mark of a cosmopolitan career, Graham Renau noted the change in his wife. What it was he could not determine. There was no lack of affection. She was always cheerful, according to her wont; but there were moments when, for the first time since their marriage, she seemed to desire solitude, when his society was no longer a necessity or a delight.

She was introspective and absent-minded. She appeared more like the woman he had first known in the Paris *pension* than his wife—a girl in whom matrimony had wrought a complete change of temperament, as he believed.

She was in revolt, and a man whose mind was clear of the obsession of a single idea would have seen this; but in Graham Renau the safety and happiness of his child obscured all other thoughts. And so, except for occasional moments of wonder when he found her less plastic than usual, the change was unremarked. She was in revolt, as she had been during those days in Paris when the conditions of life had become so irksome that her soul tension was at the point of snapping. She had acted of her own free will, it is true, in her marriage, if a will weakened by unhappiness, hypnotized by a stronger force, can be termed free. She had married the man she loved, hoping that with him she would find the joy she had always missed. She did not believe, with Carlyle, that she was "born to duty, not privilege;" she saw other lives apparently happy, and she could find no explanation to satisfy her for the emptiness of her own.

Her soul cried out for its mate—so near, so far. The petty details of a housewife's life, the care of another woman's child, the constant watchful-

ness against alarm—all these could not content.

She had no resources within herself, as a woman of a different upbringing might have had. Art, literature, music could gratify only the surface needs; they did not touch the deeps.

The long Winter months in the Surrey home, isolated by the wishes of the inmates as well as by the high brick wall—the Englishman's stronghold—only matured the dissatisfaction which had been born during the absence from her husband. But, fortunately for his peace of mind, he became less and less aware of it. Her somber moods had perplexed him during the first days of her return; afterward, he accepted them as one of the many phases of the feminine temperament. Her poise had been one of her charms for him; when it was destroyed he could only sigh at his own mistake.

The safety of Lee, his physical and mental development, became more and more the absorbing passion of Graham Renau's life. He had crucified his own ambition, and was re-living it in his son. The two became more companionable every day, and with this relation he felt less and less the need of the woman he had married, and so drifted farther away from her.

In the Spring, they made another change. The safety of the Winter, free from even the suspicion of distrust, again lulled Graham Renau's fears, and he determined to return to his native land. They would sail from Queenstown in June, so he announced, and Lucie acquiesced without demur. She no longer cared where they went, so long as she did not have to repeat the experience of the months when she had been alone with Lee—anything was better than that.

Lee's mother had not left her home during the Winter, so Graham Renau had been informed by his lawyers, and whatever surveillance had been accomplished must have been left to hirelings, who had done nothing. He was satisfied of this, for his own precautions had been carefully taken.

They left Queenstown in a storm,

and the moment she stepped from the tender to the ship, Lucie went to her room, which she did not leave until they sighted New York. All the weary days when she lay in her berth, tossed about by the relentless waves, seemed to her symbolic of the tempest-tossings of her racked soul. She constantly questioned the future. What was she to do with it? She could not return to her aunt, and take up again the life on which she had once turned her back; she knew her aunt's nature too well—its implacability, its inability to forgive or forget an injury.

She could not continue as she was, a mere looker-on at others' joy; the silent witness of the growing companionship between her husband and his boy, herself an outsider in their needs and affections; she could not! What was she to do?

The implacable force of mechanism tearing through the yielding element, the power of favoring winds, the human mind controlling the infinities of space, brought her at length to land, with her soul-torturings unsubdued, her questions still unanswered.

VI

WHEN Mary Renau left the *pension* in the rue Leo Délibes, outwitted again by her former husband, she returned to America. She had come to the end of her rope; the constant disappointments, the deceptive clues followed to futility, the betrayals of paid employees repeated over and over, the final blow when she had come so near to victory, combined to bring her to a point where she felt that she could better bear the temporary separation from Lee than continue to suffer as she was then suffering.

She would wait now with what patience she could muster, although she had never waited for anything in her life. She had gone forth and met fate more than half way; dragged it toward her when she found it facing in another direction. She had to learn a different lesson. She had to learn not

only that patience has limits, but that impatience is often impotent. She left careful instructions with French and English detectives, who smiled suavely, made rose-colored promises, and kept in reserve their determination to display their finesse less in bringing the chase to a successful termination than to an indefinite pursuit, for while finality meant a certain fixed sum, the alternative was an open treasury.

She returned to New York and to her social life, into which she swept with the zest of disappointment which ranks that of inexperience in its fervor. No hour of the day, which commenced with noon and ended at dawn, but had its engagement of so-called pleasure. She had but one rule of conduct now—to allow herself no time to think; only one ambition—to play the rôle of cork in the swirling eddies of life. If this form of existence had been a novel one, she might have found in it what she sought; but, unfortunately for her need, she had sounded its shallowness before, and though she was always in a crowd, yet she was really more alone than if she had isolated herself within four walls.

She had believed that when her husband disappeared out of her life she would have peace from outward strife and inner discontent. She still believed that with the return of her child she would gain this desire. She had not yet learned that peace is independent of environment and personality; that it is a purely mental state, as much so as resignation or forgiveness.

She had never seen Paul Trafford since the night she had ordered him from her presence. She did not miss him; there were other men ready to take his place—ball-room love-affairs, made and broken with a glance. Such devotion wearied her, but she saw no one who made a lasting impression. She found only one thing more irksome than the masculine attention she received, and that was its complement of feminine jealousy.

One night, she was sitting in a box at the theatre. Suddenly, as if a curtain had been dropped before her

mental lens, she seemed to see everything through a medium which distorted and destroyed the normal perspective. The peculiarity of the vision annoyed her. It was as if her subconscious self had destroyed the barrier which keeps its workings hid. This phenomenon was repeated several times during the next week; then its unpleasantness was replaced by another.

She was standing at the intersection of streets, where cars, cabs, omnibuses, automobiles and people jostled one another in the whirl of metropolitan traffic. Usually, she watched her chance, dodged gracefully between impeding wheels, gave a nod or look to careless cabbies, the tactics of a traveler experienced in traversing the mazes of a city centre. This time she stood helpless, unwilling, paralyzed by a sudden fear. She made one or two futile attempts to advance, but to no purpose. Finally, she was obliged to retrace her steps until she found a free crossing. She took herself to task; her reason and senses seemed more acute than usual, but her will was dead. Was she ill? She did not feel so; just the languor of late hours and the lack of out-of-door exercise, that was all. She plunged into excitement anew, but the excitement strangely tired and depressed her. Solitude had never before dispirited her; now she suffered if she were left alone a minute, and at night her maid was obliged to sleep in an adjoining room, with the door between left open.

She visited one doctor, and he recommended a change of scene. She had her trunks packed, but at the last moment changed her mind. The thought of living in an alien place was repugnant. She visited another physician, and was given bromide, electricity, all the palliatives of a diseased nerve system, some of which she threw away, some of which she tried until the reactions came with their undue depressions. She wondered, at first, as to the cause of this illness, and then became indifferent even to that.

Finally, she shut herself from the

world she had so loved and now hated, for whose approval and enjoyment she had sacrificed so much. She remembered, at this time, that she had once heard a woman say that she believed the purgatory of the lost was a place where the nervous systems became immortal, those centres of sensation, stripped of body and spirit, when the mere touch of one frail thread against another would send an agony throughout eternity. She did not know then what the woman meant, but the knowledge had come to her, and the horror of the thought occurred to her again and again.

One day, her will throbbed with a semblance of life, through the medium of drugs. In this temporary renewal of strength, she argued that there must be some one who could understand and help her. She took up a physicians' directory, and read it here and there at random. Finally, amid strange names, one she had often heard caught her eye — James Gregory. Where was it that she had heard him spoken of? By whom? Her memory recalled the circumstance. It was at a woman's luncheon, and one of the guests, a tired, etiolated invalid, had said, impressively, that James Gregory had helped more nervous women than any other physician of his time.

She ordered the carriage, and, before her new-found strength of will deserted her, was driven to his home. She arrived, fortunately, during his office hours, else the renewal of inertia might have prevented another visit.

There was a suite of luxurious waiting-rooms, filled with men and women, who, under the semblance of health, bore some weakness carefully hidden from the world. She wondered, idly, as she noted them and herself in a long mirror, bearing no expression of pain or suffering, if all humanity were alike, all bearing about concealed scars and wounds.

She gave her card to the solemn servant, and asked an immediate hearing; and, though a man with the clientèle of James Gregory could have no reason for favoring one more than

another, yet, in a surprisingly short time, she was told to follow the servant to the inner room. It was an ascetic room, striking to the eye and senses after the luxury of the outer apartments, and the man was more striking than the room, more dominant in his strength and simplicity.

He was a little above medium height, harmoniously built; strength and suppleness were in his poise. His brow was high and white; his eyes deep-set, black and piercing; his face stern, softened to a peculiar gentleness when he spoke and rarely smiled.

He led her to a chair in the middle of the room, where the light fell full on her face, and then waited patiently, with no sign of the knowledge that there were scores of impatient men and women on the other side of the door.

She had been on the verge of hysterics in the carriage and in the reception-room. She had restrained, with all the power of an enfeebled will, the desire to shriek aloud, in the torture of wounded nerves, but the atmosphere of the quiet place rested and subdued her. She looked in the face, made gentle by sympathy, and told him her soul-sickness and its attendant bodily ills.

He asked her only a few questions, and those not the ordinary shibboleth of the profession of which she had become so fatigued. The interrogations seemed to lead nowhere, yet she knew they were not idly put.

He did not tell her what was the truth—that he had seen her many times, at the opera, the theatre, on the streets, in the Park; that it was due to those glimpses that she owed the unusual attention he had bestowed, and broken the rule of precedence in his office, which he had never broken before. He had thought of her in rare intervals as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and the saddest.

"Will you help me?" she asked him, at length. "Can you?"

He put his hand on her shoulder a second—the hand of the physician—

calm, helpful. At his touch, the tears came to her eyes.

"You will go home now," he said, gently. "I shall send some one to you, a woman whom you must obey. You are to let me know whenever you want me. I am at your call. You have lived at too high a tension—that is all; you will have to suffer for a while, but I am going to help you. You need be frightened no longer."

She went home, and, for the first time in many weeks, slept soundly. A few hours later a trained nurse, a cheery, womanly companion, came; and, in obedience to the instructions she had received, Mary Renau placed herself without question in her care.

She was allowed to do what she pleased within limits, but it seemed to her that her only enjoyment was in counting the hours between the visits of her physician. He had controlled her from the first; he controlled her more and more as the days slipped into weeks. She read the books he recommended, and discussed them with him. She took uncomplainingly the tonics, the food, the exercise he ordered. She was better when with him, and when she hoped for him—that was all. Her distaste for her old life and her former friends continued. She could not conquer this, and she did not try. Occasionally, when some duty kept him from her, or when she thought she discerned in his manner only the healer, the man interested in her merely as a patient, not as a woman, and faced the possibility of his future absence from her life, the old depression would return, and with it the painful crises of nerve suffering.

Little by little, she told him her story, the unhappiness of her married life, culminating in the divorce and the abduction of her child, the fact that she was still in correspondence with detectives, lawyers and rogues, always hoping, always disappointed.

She told him her half-beliefs, that the aching mother-love was at the root of her malady, and he did not contradict her at first.

One day he was no longer the friend, the physician, the unexpressed lover. He became all at once the judge.

"You have not told me all," he said to her, and there were the stern lines in his face she had never seen since the day of her first visit at his office. "No; you have kept something back."

"What do you mean?" she demanded, weakly; but her eyes dropped.

"I mean that you are a woman morally sick. There is something on your mind that you have not told me. There is a lack of harmony in your life, something I have not reached, that I cannot reach unless you help me. There is a sin there, and until you cure that, destroy it by confession and repentance, you will never be well."

His piercing eyes looked into her soul.

"A moral sin!" she repeated; "a moral sin! Repent!" Her eyes flashed, her cheeks flushed. "Repent! forgive! confess! I shall never forgive. I shall never repent. I will hound him to the uttermost parts of the earth. He has my child—my Lee."

He put her back into the chair from which she had risen, trembling with rage.

"Do not excite yourself."

He waited a moment, while she looked at him, her eyes insolently determined.

He arose. "Very well. I can help you no more. I can give you medicine, it is true. I can recommend courses of diet and exercise, changes of air and scene. I can amuse you with my presence, but I cannot reach the seat of your malady until you help me, until you are willing to cure yourself."

He turned away, and she did not detain him until he reached the door; then she suddenly arose, and ran after him. He stopped at her touch.

"I did not say I would not confess. I will. Come back."

She spoke breathlessly, as if fearful of the weakness of her determination.

"The child belongs to him by every moral right. He gave me my divorce

on that condition. I was not the injured wife. I made him free me because I could live with him no longer. I deliberately put myself in a compromising position to force his hand. He was too implacable, too self-centred, too egotistical to realize my needs and my unhappiness. He drove me to deceptions, to irritations, but I promised on my knees that, if he would allow me to get the decree, in order to save my name and that of my family, he should have the child. He promised, believing me, even though I had deceived him so often."

His eyes were downcast; his face a blank. She could not tell his thoughts, and she went on. What a relief her confession was! She had often wanted to tell him, yet never dared. He could not desert her now. He was her physician, at least, if he were no longer her friend.

"Yes, the child is his by moral right, but the law gives him to me. I deceived him! I lied to him! Yes, I will call things by their names. I *lied* to him. I played on his faith and credulity. Give up Lee?" she laughed, scornfully. "I would have endured my life to the end, rather than that. I intended from the first, even when I was on my knees before him, to break my word."

She paused a moment to gain breath. "I still intend it. I have been disappointed, but it is only a matter of time. I can wait. I shall find him and take him."

She stopped. Only impassive features met her gaze.

"You despise me?"

The dark eyes searched her soul again.

"I pity you."

"You—pity me? Why?"

"You have broken a moral law, and you are being punished. You will go on being punished until you have made reparation. You cannot avoid it. You cannot escape it. A broken law means a broken life. I cannot mend it. You alone have that power."

"You threaten me? You say that I shall never again regain my health?"

"You will never regain your happiness, and the two are synonymous."

"Tell me, at least, that you do not despise me."

"I do not despise you, but if, after having swept your mind clear of all the sophistry with which you have swathed it, after having had the truth made clear to you, your path marked out, you still persist, I shall be disappointed. You were to blame, but not so grievously. You were very unhappy, and unhappiness, if continued in, distorts the mental and moral vision. You saw nothing clearly. You deceived yourself then, but you know now. In these weeks, you have looked things clearly in the face. You did not even need my words."

She blushed at the truth of this declaration. It was so. All these days of seclusion, she had communed with herself. She knew her own sins and her own weaknesses, as she had never known them before.

They were silent a long time. Finally, he arose.

"I am going to leave you now. Think of what I have said. Think of the duty you owe to the man you married. No divorce court can clear you of that obligation. You are hounding him from his country, from his rights and privileges. Think, too, of the duty you owe yourself. You have done wrong. You must make reparation. It is the law."

"What if I refuse?" The old revolt against domination pursued her. Unrepentant thoughts welled up, memories of baby lips and eyes, the tiger element of the mother robbed of her young. "What if I refuse?"

"You will not!"

"You will not! You will not!"

The words pursued her after he had gone, became a monotone to her restless steps. If she gained Lee she would lose him. If she lost Lee, she would gain—her breath choked her—woman love, child love.

She pushed the comparison from her mind. Whatever she decided must be decided with no ulterior gain in view. She must do right because it was right,

and in so acting she was in harmony with the great law of existence. He had made that clear to her. She must stand or fall on that issue.

Yet if she chose the unrepentant path, she would still have Lee, a compensation for many losses; a son on whom, in the years to come, she could rely for companionship, on whose growing strength she could lean.

She would have James Gregory's love, too. Her woman's intuition could not be so faulty. He would forgive her in time. What was her sin, after all?—an excess of maternal devotion. Any man could forgive that. He would, in time, for he was not different from the rest of his sex, though he seemed more implacable.

Yet these months had brought her very near the realities of life. Her illness had been a cloud in the Summer sky, presaging tempests ahead. She was now young, it is true, but there were many days ahead, and she would not always be young. How could she live through them unless she had something stable amid their instability, something incorruptible amid their corruption? She must ground her character so firmly that the years to come would find it rock-bound. She had lived on the surface long enough.

Life, as she now read its riddle, must have something in it beyond the impulse of the moment, the instinct to gratify the baser self by the crucifixion of the higher. Otherwise, it became impossible.

It was amid this conflict of desires that she, one day, received a long despatch. The wanderers were at length located. They were in a Western city, where they intended to remain indefinitely. They were living under the name of Howard. She could reach them in a few hours.

VII

GRAHAM RENAU, now Frank Howard, was looking out of his study window, when he saw an open carriage driving slowly up the street. He

watched it idly, his pen poised in air. There was something about the figure seated within, in the restless poise of the head, the nervous excitability of the hand tapping the edge of the door-frame, which caught and held his attention. He arose, as if shocked by the touch of a hidden wire. The driver had apparently mistaken the number, but the respite was momentary; he would see his mistake, turn, and find the house in a moment.

The life of constant suspicion and alarm that he had lived during the last few years made him quick to action. He matured his plan in a moment. He rang the bell, and a maid-servant, neatly capped and aproned, responded immediately. Everything in the home bore witness to Lucie's housewifely skill; the prompt obedience of the servants was one of many perfect details.

He spoke with unusual emphasis. "If any one calls, Jennie, there is no one at home. If the—the person persists in coming in, show her into this room, and call me. Be sure you close the door when you leave her."

He stepped hastily to the window, and shut the inner blinds, hiding the view into the street. He went hastily out of the room, through the house to the back porch, where Lucie sat reading. In the enclosure beyond, Lee was busy with a spade, digging in the earth, preparatory to planting a harvest he might never reap.

Lucie looked up at his swift step. She needed no words to tell her that something out of the ordinary had happened.

"She is here, Lucie," he said, quickly. "I saw her in a carriage which has driven by. The driver probably made a mistake. We have only a minute. This is what you have to do. Go up-stairs and put on your black coat and hat. She is all in black, too, and you are about the same height. The driver will not notice the difference. Take Lee, and drive to the electric cars. Go as far as—" he named a neighboring town. "Register at the hotel there as Mrs. Frances

Campbell. I will communicate with you, and tell you what you must do next."

Lucie sat as if paralyzed by the blow. "Do not wait," he said, after a moment, impatiently. "Go at once. Every second is precious."

She flew into the house and up the servants' stairway to her room, where, breathless, excited, she drew a long, black cloak from the wardrobe, a traveling hat and chiffon veil which she put on, hastily. Her hands trembled, and her breath came in gasps. The crisis had arrived. She had prayed that something might happen, and something had.

Her husband waited on the porch below for her return. Lee was throwing shovelfuls of earth to one side and the other, absorbed in his occupation; but a child's impulses are not easy to guess, and Renau kept a watchful eye upon him.

Suddenly, the clang of the bell rang through the house. The maid disappeared, and, in a moment, returned.

"There is a lady here, sir. I told her there was no one at home, but she said she would wait. I showed her into the study, as you told me."

"Very well, Jennie," he answered, slowly. "I will go to her as soon as I have finished my cigar." He had lighted it in his excitement, and sat smoking until Lucie came down.

"She is in the study," he said to her, in a low tone, for fear the maid might overhear. "I will go in and engage her in conversation. You will have a good start. There is no danger if you are quick and self-possessed. When I hear the carriage drive off I shall know that all is well."

He was absorbed in the danger to his child; he did not dare say farewell to him, for fear of a possible outcry. There was no word of sympathy for her, for her wandering life, again to be taken up—to lead, who could tell whither?—to new inconveniences, to new depressions, to new dissatisfactions.

He put a roll of bills in her hand, which he pressed gently; then he

walked with firm step toward the study.

The next few minutes meant much to him. He must not lose his self-control. He must not anger the woman there, drive her to a tempestuous exit and a chance encounter. He must wait until he was sure of his success before he could afford to taunt her with the uselessness of the struggle waged against him. He thought of Lucie's ready help, and felt secure. She would not fail him. He could depend upon her, as he could upon himself.

In a moment, he stood before his former wife.

She had grown more beautiful, though the languor of her recent illness was still upon her. She looked at him with an expression he could not fathom. It suggested nothing of the old days. Yet the beauty, the grace, the unexpected amiability of her eyes, awakened in him no thrill of reminiscent passion or regret. She was a leaf out of his past, and the leaf never returns to the branch. They had wrenched themselves apart; time and distance, sorrow and new ties had completed the work of separation. He marveled at the time when a glance from her had meant a throb of joy, and she marveled that she could ever have sorrowed as she had for him, and through him. So the past and present met.

"I have come for Lee," she said, at length. "I want him. I can live no longer without him."

There was no mention of the law or her rights, and the unexpected mood, for the moment, found him defenseless.

"I am sorry to meet you in this way," he answered, "for it disarms me. I would rather you were angry, for it would be easier to refuse. A man hates to answer gentleness with determination, but I must do it. Neither your pleadings nor your threats can move me. Do you suppose that I will give Lee up after the life we have led?" He laughed, scornfully.

She was edging toward the limit of

control. "He is mine. I have asked as a favor what is my right. Give him to me. It will save you trouble in the end to acquiesce. I have come for that purpose. Let me take him away quietly. What is the use of your refusals? I shall not lose sight of you again, you may be sure. All I have to do is to invoke the law. You are defeated! Admit it!"

She was displaying splendid mastery over herself; only the flashing eyes showed the presence of anger. He recalled her as she had been, frantic at the slightest coercion of her will, carried away by every gust of passion. She had changed indeed. He wondered what force had been at work.

He did not answer her for a moment. His ears were strained for the sound of the carriage wheels. What did the delay mean? Surely it would take Lucie but a moment to reach the gate. Why did she not hurry, when she knew his impatience?

He looked at the woman opposite him, opened his lips as if about to speak, and closed them without uttering a syllable.

"What is it?" she asked, impatiently. She took out her watch. "Must I order the driver to go back and get a lawyer? I shall not leave the house until you give me my child. I have you in my power. Let us end this peaceably, quietly. I am tired; so are you. The climax is reached. Why are you not reasonable? Why will you not admit your defeat?"

He rose, and walked restlessly back and forth. Would the carriage never go? The terrible strain of the moment seemed to deepen the lines on his brow. He could not understand the delay. He could not leave her to discover what it signified.

Suddenly, he heard the carriage wheels. She was too absorbed in her thought to notice. He breathed freely. He walked to the window, ostensibly to get more light in the room. He could see the coupé just disappearing around the corner. He threw open the blinds, then turned and faced her.

There was triumph in his face and gestures.

"What is it?" she asked, noting something inexplicable.

He wished to give the fugitives plenty of time, and fenced a little.

"How did you know I was here?"

"I have had detectives."

He interrupted. "Yes, I know."

She took the despatch from her *porte-monnaie*, and handed it to him.

He brushed it aside. "They have been clever, as usual. You will no doubt continue to pay good sums for insufficient service."

"I have paid the last," she corrected.

"Possibly not. There is no last in the game you are playing, unless you tire of it, or your exchequer becomes emptied."

He could afford to gloat over his deed. Lucie and Lee were far away.

"What do you mean? I have no time for riddles. Where is Lee? Tell me at once, and let me go."

She arose, and faced him.

"Lee is not here," he said.

"I do not believe you." But she could not disregard the triumph in his eyes.

They faced each other as they had that night when she left him with taunting words on her lips. She had believed herself the victor then, but he had defeated her, and her history had repeated itself. The cup of success was dashed from her lips at the moment when she expected to quench her thirst, and by the same hand.

"Lee gone!"

She fell back into her chair, white, speechless, helpless.

He felt sorry for her, but pity could not move him. He was playing this game for a great stake, and he must win. He had gone too far to retreat. He had sacrificed too much to render the past abortive.

Meanwhile, Lucie, left alone on the porch, braced herself for the coming hour. Lee was still in the garden below, unconscious of impending change. She knew its perils. She had re-

heard them all. Only one thing was needed, strength to meet them.

She beckoned Lee. He had been too spoiled to be easily governed, his acknowledgment of authority being less the result of training than of an inherent sweetness of disposition which made obedience easy. He demurred for a moment, but there was something in Lucie's tone, an ecstatic look in her eyes and face which seemed to his childish intuitions to promise the unusual. He patted the earth a few times with his shovel, and then, throwing it aside, approached her slowly, wiping his small hands on the immaculate linen of his trousers.

She sat down on one of the porch chairs, and drew him toward her.

He was sure now that there was something unexpected going to happen. He waited, breathless with suspense.

Lucie's eyes, usually so calm and clear, were shining with excitement; her hands trembled as they touched him; her breath came in quick gasps.

"Lee," she said, and her voice sounded strange, even to herself.

He looked at her curiously, conscious of the change in her, unknowing how to frame his knowledge into words.

"You remember what we were talking about last night?"

"Last night!" He looked at her, vaguely. Last night is ages away in a child's memory.

He tried to think. "What is it?" he questioned, eagerly. She did not seem to be leading anywhere; there was no immediate prospect of a great surprise, and his shovel was waiting for him in the nice, soft earth, and the seeds were waiting to be planted. He withdrew from her arm, but she enfolded him again.

"Listen, Lee. Don't you remember we were talking about your mama, your *real* mama?"

Now he remembered. His real mama! Surely!

As soon as Lee had grown old enough to ask questions, Lucie had insisted upon telling him the truth in regard to

his mother. Some time, so she argued, he must know. He was a precocious child. He could not be satisfied with half-facts or evasions. So she had told him that she was not his own mother, and persistent questions had elicited more than she had intended in the beginning. He learned that, far off, somewhere in the great world, hidden from his sight like the many homes he had had, the many little sweethearts he had loved, like the angels and God, and the other mysteries which enveloped his understanding, there was a *real* mama. It was of this vague person he loved to talk, particularly at night, just before going to sleep. He endowed her with all the graces of his imagination. Sometimes, in front of a Madonna in a picture-gallery, or a modern feminine face, pictured with all an artist's skill, Lee would stop, and, pointing to it, insist that it was a likeness of his mother. Once he pointed to a flag at half-mast, and asked Lucie what it meant. On being told that some great personage was dead, he thought a moment, and then said, sadly: "I hope, Lucie, it is not my mama."

Graham Renau had not altogether approved this confession of Lucie's, but he appreciated the feeling from which it sprang, and was too generous to forbid her this scant sincerity when she had to approve so much that was opposed to her training and her wishes. He was not a man to dictate in trifles, and though he often winced at Lee's questions, he realized that they were inevitable.

Lee forgot his gardening immediately, at Lucie's words. He was going to hear something of his mother, of the beautiful person who was to come to him some day from the moon or the stars; bring him beautiful presents, love him, and let him stroke her hair.

Lucie waited, her eyes fixed on the boy's transfixed countenance. Then she leaned toward him, suddenly.

"She is here, Lee, in the study with your father." She pointed to the inner room.

"Here, with papa?" The child's

face grew pale, and he shook violently. "Take me in there, Lucie," he pleaded. "Come!" He tugged at her gown, and Lucie rose.

"You must wait a moment, Lee, and then I will take you. Ask Jennie to brush your clothes."

He went inside to the maid, and Lucie took the opportunity to slip out to the gate, pay and dismiss the driver. It was the wheels of the carriage which lulled Graham Renau into a fancied security. She returned to Lee, who was waiting in a fever of expectancy. The dream of his little life was to become real. Lucie, too, was pale, and her hands trembled.

They walked slowly toward the study door. When they reached it, Lee held her back for a moment, as if he could not bring himself to the point of encounter. It seemed too wonderful to be true. He was a strange child, and no one imagined that the thought of his mother had been such a dominant element in his life. He had seen, with childish intuition, that neither his father nor Lucie cared to speak of her, and he had been left to the power of an unrestrained imagination.

It was the great moment of Lucie Renau's life. Everything she had ever done, ever thought, ever felt, seemed to her but a preliminary to this act. It was not yet too late. She could find a ready excuse, lead Lee away, and obey her husband. She could take up the old life, or she could go on to the certain destruction of existing conditions.

She put her hand deliberately on the knob of the door, turned it, and, leading Lee, who, at the last, in an agony of apprehension, hung back until he was almost concealed by her skirts, entered the room.

It was the moment when Lee's mother, white, stricken, fell back into her chair at the announcement that her child had again disappeared.

For a moment, a long moment, there was no sound in the room. Graham Renau and his former wife were overcome at the unexpected situation. Lucie's eyes were downcast. She did

not dare look up, and Lee was still embarrassed, taking furtive peeps through the folds of Lucie's gown.

Then the mother voice broke the silence, and mother arms, long deprived of that which they should have held, were outstretched.

The tone could not be mistaken. Lee recognized it as an echo from a far-off, forgotten babyhood. He had not heard it since. He flew across the room, and into the waiting embrace.

When she had sufficiently recovered her composure, Mary Renau, with Lee firmly clasping her hand, turned to the door. She cast one look of contempt at the man opposite her. She had convicted him in a lie, and a lie, he told her once, was a woman's weapon.

He did not attempt to deceive her. He did not seek to restrain her, to take Lee from her by force or entreaty. He sat, crushed, overcome by the unexpected turn of affairs.

At the entrance she faced Lucie, who stood, her arms drooping, her eyes for the first time raised to the level of her own.

"You are—?" She hesitated, conscious that she had seen her before.

Lee answered the inquiry.

"This is Lucie," he explained. He felt that it was his proud privilege to introduce his real mama to all his companions, to his garden, his dog and cat, his bird and playthings. "This is Lucie," he repeated; "papa's wife, you know. We live here."

Mary Renau gazed at Lucie, resentfully. Perhaps she had stolen some of her child's love from her, robbed her of a part of the treasure long due.

Then she remembered her. "I saw you once at the *pension* in Paris."

Lucie nodded. She could not speak. All the disappointment of those lonely hours in the French boarding-house returned to Mary Renau. "You helped them escape, then?" she questioned. "I suspected it. Was I right?"

Again Lucie nodded.

"Then why—did you do this?" She looked at her in wonder. All at once, the despair in Lucie's face told her the

truth. She knew by intuition what this woman, Lee's stepmother, must have suffered.

They looked into each other's eyes for a moment, soul to soul; then Lucie stepped aside, and Mary Renau and her son went out.

The door closed behind them. Lucie and her husband were alone.

VIII

THERE are times in life when a wise silence is the only possible cure for the inward tumult. Such a time had come to Graham Renau. He was at a white heat. He felt, for a wild moment, as if he could kill the woman before him. He had been outwitted, tricked, betrayed; but, to do him justice, that was not the pang which moved him to such a rage of bitterness. He had lost the one thing out of his life which gave that life a meaning. The motive power was gone. He was overwhelmed by the tragedy of the last few minutes and by its meaning, already scattered in thought over the years that were to come. He had thrown away everything for a single object, and now that object was, without reason, taken from him. Better would it have been for him if he had gone quietly from his home, alone, the night of the divorce. He would have lost his child, yet that loss, compared with the one he now suffered, would have been but infinitesimal. Lee, the companion of his days, the hope of his future, the focus of his dreams—Lee was gone. Who could take his place? What palliative could be offered him for what he was suffering, and would suffer in the future?

But the shrinking, trembling figure before him aroused the manliness in him. He could not hurt the down-trodden. He pushed a chair toward her, and she sank into it, limp, inert, her limbs refusing further office.

At last, he found speech, but his throat was dry and his voice sounded harsh. "Why did you do it? Why

did you betray me?" Possibly there might be an explanation—he would not condemn her yet.

She was silent, and he repeated the question, thinking that she had not heard him.

He spoke more sternly and loudly the second time. "Answer me. I demand an explanation. Why did you break your word to me? Why did you bring Lee here—to that woman, instead of obeying my directions?"

The tone and look seared her heart. It was the first time he had ever spoken or looked at her unkindly. But she had, by her own act, cut herself loose from his affection and respect. There was but one more thing she could do, one lower depth to which she could descend in his esteem.

The habit of her life, that stern, uncompromising conscience, which demanded that she should not look, speak or act the lie, forced her to confession.

"I did worse than that. I—" she stammered a little, then went on—"I sent the despatch telling her that we were here."

"You did—what?"

Graham Renau could not believe the words he had heard. He waited for her to repeat them, and she repeated them, dully but distinctly. "I sent the message to Lee's mother, telling her our whereabouts."

He thrust his hands deep down into his pockets. He knew now how the brute man felt. There were primitive passions in him seeking an outlet. He was afraid of himself. The very fear made him more controlled, more courteous in his manner than ever before. He opened the door quietly.

"Will you go now? I cannot talk to you yet. I cannot trust myself. In another hour I shall ask you to return. I should like then to hear your reasons for doing what you did, but I cannot listen now."

Without a word, she went away. He closed the door after her.

The air of the place stifled him; its atmosphere seemed to breathe the

presence of those who had been with him but a short time before. He caught up his hat, and left the room. He would walk his bad passions off, as he had done so often in his life, tire them out, purify them in the air of the open.

He walked and walked and walked. He seemed pursued by some evil Thing. Finally, the Thing reached him, passed him without a touch, and he breathed freely, as if released from chains. He could go back now and meet his wife. He could have it out. The worst was over.

He had come again to the parting of ways; yet he felt in no haste to make a decision in regard to the future. He had reached the dead-centre of thought.

Calm, collected, his brow unruffled, his face serene, he reëntered the house. He rang the bell, and the maid-servant, frantic with curiosity, but restraining it as is a servant's wont, sure that future events will disclose it, answered the bell.

"Tell your mistress I would like to see her."

His summons was answered immediately, as if Lucie had anticipated it.

She, too, was quiet now and subdued. She seemed no longer afraid. She had passed through the crisis; now only its inevitable consequences awaited her, and they could not be blacker than she had painted them.

She had spent the last few hours on her knees, and there was the look of the novice at the altar in her face.

There was resignation, renunciation, but no retraction. She knew that, if she had again to live through the last year, she would act as she had done. The deed was an inevitable result of her upbringing, her temperament, her strong passions. She could not have done otherwise and lived.

She had no finesse or subtlety. She could not use the wiles of her sex—play the woman to avert the man's wrath, the game which has been played

and will be played so long as there are women and men in the world.

He placed a chair for her, and she sat down.

"Why did you do it?" He felt that he must judge her impartially, without prejudice.

"Why did I do it? This is why." She was no longer afraid of him. She had cut herself adrift from fear with indecision—for the two are inseparable companions. "You forced me to do it. You are to blame—you, and you alone."

"I?" He looked at her in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"I mean this. You had made of me a slave, and a slave will sooner or later revolt. I revolted—that is all."

"A slave!" He repeated the words after her, looking about the luxurious room, at her fashionably made gown, her fingers, on which sparkled rings of great value. His mind pictured her as he had first known her, shabby, dependent, unhappy.

"I know! I know!" She read his thought in his face. "The carpets are softer, and the gown is more expensive, and I have enough to eat and drink; I do not have to account for every minute of my time, but I am a slave—I was," she corrected, "as much a slave as in the days before I knew you. I revolted against that slavery, and I revolted against this. I was not born for it; something within me"—she pointed pathetically to her heart—"forced me to free myself from the bondage."

He did not attempt to check her eloquence, but in the words repeated after her, "a slave," she read the poignant accents of reproach and misapprehension.

"You have sacrificed your whole life to one idea. You have given up everything else. You looked on me simply as a furtherance to your hopes. I was no more to you than the cars or the carriage which, in time of danger, took you and your child from the point of attack. I was simply a means to an end—a thing, a piece of furniture—not a human being with human needs and

passions, with a life of her own, an individual existence with individual needs."

He was silent, tapping the table with the pencil held in his hand, and, again, she seemed to read the unspoken thought in his face.

"I know that you did not marry me under false pretenses. You told me all. You did not offer me your love, it is true, but I believed that I could satisfy my appetite with husks, and I found that I could not. Other women find that out, and have their own ways of remedying the evil. I had none, none but the one path. I could not leave you, for I surely would have returned when I felt that you needed me, that you were in danger or trouble. I had to free myself by some decisive act, just as one needs physical pain, sometimes, to relieve the mental. That was the only thing that suggested itself to me as final, conclusive. That could not be undone."

Was this the woman he had believed a pliant reed to bend to his hand? He looked at her as he had never looked at her before in all the years of their companionship. He saw a frail, girlish figure, the face pale, the features small, refined, crowned with an aureole of brown hair, the eyes big and luminous; in her normal moods they were gentle, almost pathetic in their dumb reproach, like those of an animal; now they were lighted by the inner fire, kindled by the remembrance of her wrongs.

Reserved usually, at this crisis there was a torrent of eloquence ready at her call.

"I have been a good wife to you, a mother to your child, a companion in your need. I turned my back on my old life and its manifest duty, I accepted conditions repugnant to every fiber of my being, because I loved you and because I believed that, in time, such love as mine would meet its reward; but every day took me farther and farther from that goal, and, well"—she broke off, impetuously—"you know the rest. I have committed an unpardonable sin, it is true, but better

that than the life I was condemned to lead, the galley in which I was chained to the oar.

"You have loved Lee! But such love as you display is only a refined form of egotism. He is your flesh and blood, and you design to re-live in him opportunities and ambitions denied yourself. Parental love like that, when it blinds its possessor to every other duty in life, is merely selfishness. A man has no right to choose one duty—one form of sacrifice, and elude all others."

His eyes were smoldering fires. He felt as if a pet dog had turned, and buried its teeth in his arm.

"I have suffered," she went on, relentlessly, "and am punished. I, too, made an idol, and the idol has crushed me with its weight."

There was no answer. He could not trust himself to speak. He did not wish to. After a moment, she arose, and again left him to his communings.

He had intended to overwhelm her with the power of his scorn. He had wished to put before her the cruelty of her deed in words of such scorching anger that she would never again be able to forget them. He had intended them to sear her conscience throughout eternity. But she had turned the tables upon him, and now her words were burning into his soul.

Was what she had said true? Had his whole life been but an egotistic following of the dictates of self? Was she right in asserting that life is too complex, holds too many responsibilities for a man to concentrate his thoughts on one and shake himself free from the others? Were those duties that he had cast aside claiming a just retribution? He had asked these questions—asked and refused to answer, many times.

Were women all alike? Did they demand a man's soul, his will, his all? Were they not creatures to be satisfied with luxury, to be merely cared for and forgotten?

"The claim of the wife." The words danced before his eyes as he sat at his desk, his face buried in his hands. Had

either of the women who had borne his name been recognized by him in her true light? The first was a beautiful girl, to entertain his friends, to flaunt his successes before the world, to be a mother to his child; the second a helper in securing to that child, the offspring of another woman, the future he had designed for it. Was it any wonder that each in turn had revolted?

He had broken the great law—the law of life that points the way, that teaches by the experience of others, that rewards and punishes so unflinchingly.

Step by step, he retraced the past. Step by step, he admitted his errors. He extenuated nothing; he overlooked nothing. He was a just man, at bottom, and this was not the first time that conscience had accused him.

The future! He shuddered. Must he forgive the woman who had so wronged him—love her? How could one force love? They could not go on hating each other on account of the betrayal of trust. They must either separate, go their own ways, or else there must be forgiveness and a beginning all over again. He must give her the place she demanded, the place of honor in his life, or else she would have nothing. She had expressed this ultimatum in her act, and he so read it.

And she was right—that was the worst of it; right in her claim, if not in the manner of its enforcement. What was he to do? He imagined her in the room above, sitting crouched in her easy-chair, which made her frail figure so tiny in comparison, awaiting the decision that would make of her an outcast or the partner of his life in the future.

No, he could not forgive her. The memory of the lost child prevented. Yet—

And while he was agonizing in spirit, weighing the *pros* of right and wisdom, against the *cons* of anger, thwarted hopes and the inertia of feeling toward the woman who had appealed to him only through her

yielding to his will, a similar drama was being enacted elsewhere, conflicting desires were being balanced in the scale, as he was balancing them.

When Mary Renau left the house, she looked about her for the carriage whose driver she had ordered to await her further instructions. It was not in sight. She walked along hurriedly, half-dragging Lee after her, until she saw a vehicle in the distance, which she hailed. She lifted her child into it, and gave the name of her hotel, then sank back on the cushions, exhausted. Lee was uneasy, and wriggled to the edge of the seat. As soon as the neighborhood with which he was familiar disappeared into strange streets, the fear of the unknown assailed him. He looked at his mother. Some childish form of reasoning went on in his brain. He had seen her, and embraced her, but the novelty of her presence had worn off. She was like other people, and the sense of her real strangeness overpowered him.

He wanted his home; Lucie, who knew his needs before he expressed them; his father, his kittens, his toys. Where was he going? Was his mother taking him away from them forever? Would there be no Lucie to hear his prayers, and no father to come and kiss him good night?

"I want to go home!" he cried, suddenly. "I want to go home!"

His mother drew him toward her, and, as his sobs became more violent, she realized that she had forgotten the mother method of soothing. It was so long since she had been called upon to exercise that dear pleasure! What should she say to him? She tried to coax him, to make him promises, but to no purpose. Lee was not accustomed to having his childish will thwarted. The force of habit, so strong in every child, was particularly so in him; the delicacy of his early years had made him extraordinarily susceptible, and during the many changes in his life, which had seemed to tear soul and body apart, it

was only by the most careful attention that serious results had been averted. He withdrew himself angrily from the encircling arm, and sank, a heap of tearful misery, on the floor of the carriage.

She remembered, with a pang of regret at her thoughtlessness, that she had no toys to amuse him. He could not be reasoned with. Were they to begin their new life in this way? She tried again to soothe him, but it was useless. Finally, she left him to his sorrow while she devised means of averting it.

When they reached the hotel, he refused to leave the carriage, and had to be taken from it by force. He was a heavy child, but she staggered up the steps with him in her arms. At the door, she was met by one of the employees.

"Madame, a gentleman has been waiting for you an hour. He is in the reception-room."

"A gentleman—for me? Impossible." She knew no one in the city. She had told no one of her journey, no one. Yes, she had sent one note, a brief one to James Gregory, telling him of her departure and her destination. If it were he, he must have followed her immediately.

She entered the elevator, and went to her room, where she removed her hat and cloak. Lee refused to be comforted. She looked at him helplessly, and finally dragged him with her, not daring to leave him alone in the room.

A moment later, she confronted James Gregory, the man she loved and by whom she was loved in turn.

IX

JAMES GREGORY arose when she entered, and came leisurely forward. Mary Renau was visibly embarrassed, and his own ease made more apparent her lack of control.

"This is Lee," she stammered, dropping her head, ostensibly to look at her boy, in reality to avoid meeting the piercing eyes.

Lee had stopped his crying, worn out by the violence of his emotions; but the ruffled hair, the paths of recent tears were evidences to the keen eyes looking at him of the storm and stress of the situation. He held out his hand.

Lee was a child who could be easily attracted. He had been taught to avoid strangers, but his own inclinations were gregarious. There was something that fascinated him in the voice and manner and the kindness of the glance. They renewed his hope. He left his mother's side, and came forward.

"I want to go home," he pleaded; "will you take me?"

He put out his small hand, and James Gregory grasped it firmly.

"So you want to go home, my little man?"

Lee nodded.

"Well, you are going soon. Be patient a few minutes longer."

Lee looked ecstatic. He did not for a moment doubt his new friend. He had gained his wish, and was content now to look around and become interested in the objects scattered about the room.

James Gregory led Mary Renau to the window, where they were screened from the curiosity of any inquirer. "I received your note, and started immediately. I almost caught the train on which you came; when I missed it, I took the next. You must have known I would not allow you to come alone."

"I was in such a hurry, I could not wait. I was afraid my determination would weaken."

"And it did?" he said, kindly, looking in the direction of Lee, who was gazing at a picture of some dogs and cats living together in artistic, if impossible, harmony.

"It did," she repeated after him, as a lesson learned by rote.

"Tell me about it," he continued, still more kindly; and, after the trials of the last hour, his serenity soothed her immeasurably.

"I had made up my mind, as I wrote you, that I would give up my child. I

came with the intention to tell Graham Renau that. I came to release him from my anger and pursuit; to accept a compromise if he would offer it, if not to give up Lee forever. I had fought it all out. I had calmed myself into a fixed resolve. But with every mile I approached my child my determination weakened. When I reached the house, and realized that the same walls enclosed us once more, I could not give him up—I could not!”

She buried her face in her hands. “You do not know what it is. You do not know what I suffer. You condemn me; you judge me, but if you could see the passions tearing at my heart, if you only knew!”

“I condemn you?” He took her hands from her face. “I? How little you know me! How little you realize my love for you! I do not condemn you or judge you. I want to help you—that is all. I knew the struggle. I knew how it would end. I thought that by coming after you I could be of aid—that is all.”

He looked at Lee again, and her eyes followed his.

“Help me, you mean?”

“You know what I mean. It is not too late.”

He was holding her hands, and he placed them gently together.

“I must give Lee up—after all this weary time? give him up when I have just regained him?”

She walked away from him. She wanted to shut out his presence, at least from her sight. She looked out into the street already darkening in the twilight. How she had fought against the tyranny of another will all her life! How hard it was that she should be condemned to make a choice between her lover and her child! It was like sacrificing one limb to save another. How cruel life was, with its endless duties, its endless sacrifices, its endless unhappiness!

She turned away from the window, and walked toward the man and the child; they were standing close together. She took hold of a hand of each, and pushed them apart. Lee

looked hurt at her violence, and walked away.

Her eyes followed him. She whispered her question.

“Supposing I say no? Supposing I will not give him up—what then?”

James Gregory hesitated a moment. “It will make no difference in my attitude toward you. I shall always love you. I could not do otherwise. I shall always want you for my wife.”

“You would take Lee? You would be a father to him?”

“I would love him as a father. It would not be a difficult task.” And he looked smilingly at the beautiful boy, so like his mother.

His tone and manner were all that could be desired, and she knew that he spoke the truth; but there was something indefinable between them, something she could not grasp and put into words. And this something would be always between them; it would spoil the harmony of the life to come; it was the shadow of the lie she had told, of the duty whose plainly marked path she had refused to follow.

“You are generous to me,” she said, at length, “too generous. I will be no less so.” She turned white as a lily. “I will give up Lee.”

“You mean it?”

“I mean it.” There was no further faltering. With the spoken words came the power to put them into action.

A half-hour afterward, James Gregory lifted Lee, who had been fed and comforted, into his arms, and left the hotel. Mary Renau walked after them, her step more elastic, her eyes brighter, her head more erect than it had been for months. She had been through the fire of sacrifice, and had come out purified. There would be many hours in the future when the thought of Lee growing up under another woman’s care, ignorant of her, unknowing and unheeding, would be a torture to her spirit; but rather that torture than the daily presence of an evil she had voluntarily accepted as the foundation of her future existence. She was content.

Better than all, she knew that, should James Gregory step out of her life, she would still persist in her resolve. Her momentary weakness had been but a natural relapse after agonies of indecision.

They were very quiet on the drive. Lee was tired, and he slept, his head against the shoulder of his new friend, while Mary Renau and her lover were quiet; the deeps had been sounded, and their spirits needed no words to express their harmony.

The bell clanged through the house, but Graham Renau, sitting in his study, his head buried in his hands, did not hear it. He was still perplexed in spirit, trying to unravel the secret of his existence, trying to come to some conclusion that would offer a harmonious solution.

The maid opened the door, and, her curiosity still unsatiated, admitted the trio. Lee slept on peacefully. She started to rap at the study door, but Mary Renau prevented. "You need not announce us." She put her hand on the knob, and beckoned James Gregory to follow her.

They entered the room softly, and the servant, ostensibly to turn on the gas, followed and flooded the room with light, disclosing its occupant sitting there, with the marks of the struggle he was passing through on his face.

Renau started to his feet angrily at the intrusion.

The light had wakened Lee, and, after a second of dazed consciousness, he slipped to the floor.

"I have come back, papa," he cried, in his childish treble. "Did you miss me?"

His father took him in his arms, and buried his face on the boy's shoulder. He was ashamed of his tears, but the relief was overpowering.

"What is it?" he asked, after a moment, looking at Lee's companions. "Why have you brought him back—to torture me?"

"I have brought him back for good," the mother answered, gently. "He is

yours. I did not come here this afternoon to take him. I came to renounce him, but the temptation was too great, and I yielded to it."

Lee looked from one to the other, inquiringly. He did not understand, but he was conscious that something unusual was in the air, something which escaped his childish penetration. He tried to remedy it.

"This is my friend, papa," he interrupted, taking hold of James Gregory's hand. "He brought me back. I think," and he looked at his mother inquiringly, "I think she wanted to keep me."

The strain of the situation was over. Lee's explanation was graphic. His mother wondered if his father understood its significance; Renau's eyes looked at her companion keenly, then sought her own, and she read therein a full comprehension of the relation.

"Let us talk it over," she said, simply. "It is no wonder you are surprised."

She sank into a chair; the excitement of the last few hours was beginning to tell.

Gregory did not follow her example. "I will leave you together," he said, in answer to her gesture. "I will wait for you outside. Good-bye, Lee." Then he bowed gravely to Renau, and went out.

"You mean it?" said the father, eagerly, as the door closed. "You mean it? You mean that I can live my life again as a man—that you have brought me my freedom, as well as my child?"

It seemed to him that he had never before realized how much he had been forced to cut out of his life until he saw before him the immediate prospect of regaining his place in the world. He could not have taken it without his child.

And his words pierced Mary Renau's heart. Never had she realized what she had caused the man before her to undergo. All at once, the horror of the life he had led seemed to overwhelm her. They had both suffered, and how easy it would have been to have avoided much of that suffering. She

remembered reading once that every war could have been averted had several men met about a green-covered table and come to a compromise. Then no single drop of blood would ever have been shed.

That was true of the war they had waged against each other. They could have avoided all its sorrow, with a little more patience, a little more experience, a little more self-control. But the past, with its mistakes, was over; it was useless looking into it. There was the present to improve, and the future to meet, without fear or reproach.

They talked together a long time, without reserve, like two friends. She told him in detail of the life she had led since they parted; of her pursuits, of the many times she had almost overtaken him; of the many disappointments and the implacable resolve that each succeeding failure crystallized into rigidity. She told him of her illness, of her meeting with James Gregory, his influence over her and their mutual love.

And this was the woman whose life had once so closely touched his own, and yet of whose real self he had been so hopelessly ignorant! This was the woman he had believed a mere butterfly, incapable of feeling anything except a sting to her own pride and vanity!

Yet her presence aroused in him no aftermath of feeling, except the affection he might have experienced toward a sister from whom he had been alienated, and he read in her words and expression a reciprocal sentiment.

She had come into her own, into the kingdom from which she had long been an outcast. She loved for the first time in her life, and was loved in return. He felt no pang of bitterness; they were the victims of a youthful mistake, and now they were seeking to repair its errors.

He met her confidence with one in return. He told her of the weariness of the life he had led, of his fears for Lee's health, of his meeting with Lucie Browning and the events which had resulted in his second marriage.

Lee was prone on the divan, and their voices soon lulled him into slumber.

Finally, their histories were told. There was nothing more to say. She looked at her child, and looked away again. Renau read in her eyes the agony of the renunciation that was to come.

"Do you think that I can accept your sacrifice selfishly? You have the law, you have the social right on your side. You are freely canceling them. I cannot take such a favor without giving you something in return."

She looked at him breathlessly. What did his words imply? Was it possible that fate, after all, was not as implacable as it seemed?

It had never occurred to her that Graham Renau would be generous in his turn. He had always been so inflexible, a man who would neither forgive nor compromise.

Their eyes met, and then their glances rested on the sleeping child.

Graham Renau spoke impressively. "No sophistry can hide the fact that he belongs to us both. That is the bald truth. No law has the right to say that I shall have him or that you shall have him, except in so far as it protects him in regard to his education and his need. It is a matter for us to settle and to settle by compromise, a mutual giving up, and a mutual gain. Hereafter, Lee shall spend half his time with you."

She tried to thank him.

"It is not necessary," and he waved the attempt aside. "We know each other at last. Let us have no future misunderstanding. I shall return to my work." He threw out his hands with a gesture of relief. "It will be easy to communicate with you. You shall have your rights; trust me."

She arose, and put out both hands toward him.

"How happy I am—how happy! And you?"

"Happier than I have been for years."

Lee opened his eyes at her parting

kiss. "You are going away?" he asked, wide awake in a moment, and viewing her departure with disapproval. He thought he had arranged everything before he went to sleep. He had intended that they should all live together.

"I am going, my child, but some day soon you are coming to visit me? You will like that?"

Lee hesitated. He did not wish to commit himself, but he did not wish to lose her.

"I shall see *him*?" he asked, thoughtfully.

The pronoun was suggestive. His mother blushed. "I hope so," she said.

Lee smiled. "I'll come, then," and he kissed her good-bye, rapturously.

At the door she turned; the remembrance of another held her own happiness in check for a moment.

"There is some one you must be good to," she murmured, "some one who loves you, needs you."

"I know," Graham Renau lowered his head. "I have not treated her well, but I intend now to repair the wrong."

X

LUCIE folded her dresses, not allowing the slightest wrinkle to disturb their smooth surfaces. She was always neat and methodical, and the necessity of doing something led her, perhaps, to an exceptional care in all the little niceties of packing. It was only by work that she could relieve the anguish of her thought. She was not a coward. She had deliberately placed herself beyond the pale of forgiveness, and she did not repent; but to imagine consequences and to face them are two different propositions. The reality was worse, much worse, than she had ever dreamed.

There was nothing for her to do but to go away—where she did not know, for the future looked black. Yet there must be something for her to do, some one to whom she could turn for help, some place in which she might hide in

the great world outside. She was inexperienced, she was alone and unhappy, but her determination never wavered. She must anticipate his withdrawal from their relationship by her own. She could not live through the agony of having him spurn her, of seeing him deliberately cut himself adrift; she could not bear to have him talk to her about the care of her future, as she was sure the manliness of his nature would prompt. No, she would go away quietly; she would drop his name, and in a little while he would forget her; she had made only a slight impression in his life; she had been of use to him, but she had deliberately crucified that need.

The adoration of her early acquaintance with him; the blind creed that whatever he did was right because he did it, had been replaced in the latter days, the days that led to her betrayal of trust, by a clear-sightedness in regard to his fault—that selfishness which would sacrifice everything and everybody to a single purpose. But this vision had not destroyed her love; rather, it had strengthened it, for the nearer he approached her in the common weakness of humanity, the more and more absorbing her devotion became.

She was ignorant of all that had taken place since she left him in the study. The maid had brought her a cup of tea, curious to find out what had happened. She had taken it, placed it on the table and forgotten it.

She closed and locked her trunk. Where should she have it sent? At this mental query, the floodgates were opened. She sat on the floor, and abandoned herself to the luxury of woe. The tears relieved her. She decided that she would leave a note, saying that she would send for her belongings. She had eluded pursuit too often not to have many avenues of possible escape.

She went to the writing-table, and drew its paraphernalia toward her.

She wrote firmly. She did not allow

herself to become again weakened by a moment of indecision.

"Dear Graham," she commenced her farewell; "I did not ask you to forgive me. I do not. I am going away to relieve you of the burden of my presence and of my future. Some time, perhaps, you will think of me kindly. I live only in that hope."

Then she wrote some directions to the servants in regard to household matters.

She would slip out quietly, after sending word that she was too ill to come to dinner. It would be a favorable time for her departure.

She heard the outer door close, and, moved by a sudden impulse, went to the window. There was a carriage at the door, and by the flickering of the street-lamp, just lighted, she could see a man stepping into the coupé, after giving some directions to the driver.

So he had taken the initiative. He had deserted her. It was too late! Gone, without a word, without a backward look! The end of all things had come!

Should she go, or should she stay? Her preparations were all made, but how useless the journey into the unknown, now that the reason for it no longer existed. She wondered where he had gone. Had he followed his wife? Would they meet and forgive, a reconciliation made possible by her own act?

In the moments that followed, it seemed to her that she suffered as she had never suffered before. She had believed that she had reached the limit of agony, but there were still, it would seem, fibers of being that could be wrung. Deserted, betrayed, her rival victorious, her husband unforgiving and perhaps unfaithful; an outcast from love, charity and forgiveness!

No, she could not stay. She would rather be an outcast in reality than breathe any longer the atmosphere that stifled her by the force of its association.

She hurriedly put on her cloak and hat. She looked about the room to see that everything was in order—the last look that the careful housewife unconsciously gives before she leaves her home.

Just at that moment, there was a knock. She started toward the door, and then hesitated. What excuse could she give to the servant for going out at that time? What excuse? There was no longer necessity for excuse. There was no one interested in her departure or return.

She opened the door. On the threshold stood her husband, holding his boy by the hand, with an expression in his face she had never seen; it was the expression the Prodigal might have borne, when, weary of wandering, he entered into the place of peace and security.

He looked at her, then at the strapped trunk.

"I am going away," she faltered.

"You are—what?"

She looked up, her lips quivering.

"I am going away."

He caught her by the wrists. "You are going to do nothing of the kind. You are my wife. I want you—need you. Tell her so, Lee."

He thrust Lee forward, and she took the tiny hands in hers.

"What does it mean, dear? Why have you come back?"

"They brought me back," he answered, vaguely. "I am going to visit her some time, papa says."

She glanced at her husband.

"It is all over, Lucie," he said, softly; "all over. She brought him back of her own will. We have forgiven each other, and compromised, as we should have done in the beginning. I see it now. It only remains for you to forgive me."

She tried to speak, but he stopped her.

"Wait a minute! I have not told you all. I have not been quite so bad, so selfish as you thought me. I have never been satisfied with myself. I have never believed in myself or in the righteousness of my deeds. I

have been conscious of my neglected duties and responsibilities, but when they have thrust themselves into my mind, I have struck them aside. I knew, the night of my divorce, that Mary Renau had much to forgive; that I had not been blameless. I knew it afterward, but I tried to extenuate my selfishness by false reasoning. And your words—they cut me to the quick, for they were the truth, and one does not face the truth unflinchingly. But even then, so weak was I, so obstinate, so inflexible, I should have refused to forgive, to go on with the old life, if it had not been”—he pointed to the child—“for his return. I have been a bad husband, but I want to begin the new life. I want to do what is right. Will you help me?”

He drew her toward him, and she yielded to his embrace.

“You did not see him,” said Lee to Lucie, as they went down to dinner, hand in hand, much to the disgust of the maid, who had hoped for something more exciting. “He is ever so nice, and is going to marry mama. I,” and his small chest swelled with importance, “am going to visit them, and he will be a very good friend of mine. I am sure of it. I feel that I can trust him.”

But Lucie’s thoughts were far away, with a poet’s words:

“All was ended now, the hope, and the fear,
and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!”



A DUBIOUS OUTLOOK

DR. OLDBOY—Is your practice increasing?

DR. YOUNGBLOOD—Yes, and no. There is no increase in the number of patients, but I have to go to see them oftener.



AN EXPLANATION NECESSARY

MRS. BRIDGES—How long were you in your last place?

APPLICANT—Two weeks.

MR. BRIDGES (*from adjoining room*)—Mary, ask the lady what delayed her.



LOCATING THE CAUSE

HUSBAND (*deathly seasick*)—Oh, let me die!

WIFE—Well, why don’t you, John?

“It must be that insurance policy I took out before I left home.”

THE OLD MILL

By Madison Cawein

ON the wild South Fork of Harrod's Creek,
O'ergrown with creepers, if you should seek,
You will find an ancient water-mill
Of stone below a wooded hill.
Its weedy wheel is not less still
Than its image that sleeps in the grassy pool
Where the moccasin swims; and, slimly cool,
Like streaks of light through the blurs of sun,
The silver minnows and crawfish run.
The burdock sprawls on its sill of pine;
And, in its pathway, eglantine
And blackberry tangle and intertwine;
Ox-daisies checker with bronze and gold
The bushy banks of its mill-race old;
The owl in its loft as safely lairs
As the fox in its cellar, that whelps and cares
Naught for the hunters who gallop by
With their baying hounds; the martins fly
Around its chimney and build therein;
And wasp and hornet, with murmurous din,
Plaster their nets, that none disturb,
On window-lintel and hopper-curb.
Once I stood in this old stone mill,
Once as the day died over the hill,
And night came on; and stark and still
I met with phantoms upon its stairs,
Shadows, that took me unawares,
Eyed with fire and cowed with gloom—
Twilight phantoms, that crowded, dark,
The dim interior, each eye a spark
Of sunset, creviced, within the room—
While a moist, chill, moldering, dead perfume
Of crumbling timbers and rotting grain,
On floors all warped with the sun and rain,
Made of the stagnant air a cell,
Round the cobwebbed rafters hung like a spell;
And made my mind, despite me, run
On thoughts of a hidden skeleton,
There in the walls, or, dripping dank,
Under the floor, 'neath a certain plank,
Glowing, grim in the mossy wet,
In its cavernous eyes a wild regret.

I had entered when the evening star
 In the saffron heaven was sparkling afar,
 In all its glory of light divine,
 Like a diamond drowned in kingly wine;
 And I stayed till the heavens hung low and gray,
 And the clouds of the storm drove down and away,
 Like the tattered leaves of an Autumn day;
 And the wild rain beat on the rotting roof,
 Like the goblin dance of the Fiend's own hoof,
 Till the spider dropped from its dusty woof;
 And the thunder throbbed like a mighty heart;
 And the wild wind filled each crannied part
 Of the mill with moanings, that seemed to be
 The voice of an ancient agony—
 Till the beetle shrunk in its board of pine,
 And the lightning lit with its instant shine
 The tossing terror of tree and vine.
 Then, all on a sudden, the storm was still,
 And I saw *her* there, near the shattered sill
 Of the window, gazing from the mill
 Into the darkness under the storm;
 Around her flickering hair and form
 Unearthly glimmer. She seemed to lean
 To the rushing waters that roared unseen;
 A moment only she seemed to sway
 Before me there in the lightning gray,
 Then utterly vanished. . . . And was it she,
 The miller's daughter who died, they say,
 Who flung herself on the mill's great wheel,
 Long years ago, in her heart's despair?—
 Or was it a dream, a fantasy,
 That the place and the moment made me feel,
 And imagination imaged there?



THOUGHT IT SAFE ENOUGH

THE WIFE—John, how did you come to propose to me the first time you met me?

THE HUSBAND—I never expected to see you again.



THE JUDGE—How can you expect, madam, to receive twice as much alimony as your husband's income?

THE GRIEVED ONE—But that's what I spent when we were married.

THE KNIGHTLY LOVE OF SPIKE MCCOOL

By Roland Franklyn Andrews

THE back hair of a woman appeals to the heart of man, according to the fashion of the hair and the manner of the man. Fluffy, twisty, yellow curls delight him who revels in the sunshine without analytical speculation as to the cause of his happiness, and soft, glistening curls stir the tenderness of him who instinctively seeks in life the delicately luxurious. It is the hair which sweeps in firm, graceful curve, without coil or curl, and yet without Puritanical severity, from neck to crown, there to be trimly captured and confined, which brings added beats to the heart of the man with two fists and a real jaw. Such was the hair of Cornelia Wallace. It displayed itself above the seat of the victoria, as that correctly appointed vehicle jingled down the Avenue—wherefore Spike McCool, standing on the corner by the great granite pile where people eat, and meditating on the evanescent character of human riches, fell in love.

"She's a peacherino," pronounced Mr. McCool, with conviction. "T'or-oughbred."

Devotion to his profession and long association with the masters thereof had given to Mr. McCool a certain abruptness of manner and inelegance of speech. They had not, however, dulled the keen edge of his perceptions nor noticeably contracted his broad comprehension. He had caught but a fleeting glimpse of the girl's profile, and, although the theories of the Bertillon system were not entirely unknown to him, he could scarcely have determined her patrician origin from form and feature; yet he had unhesitatingly arrived at an appraisal of ap-

pearance and characteristics long before agreed upon as correct by numbers of highly educated men and women, admittedly good judges in such matters. It may be added that exactly the same opinion was held by young Wilfred Oglesby, who sat beside Miss Wallace in the victoria; though, as Mr. Oglesby possessed neither fists nor jaw, it must be inferred that it was not the back hair which roused his enthusiasm.

Mr. McCool followed the slowly moving vehicle, and permitted himself further study of that hair. He had risen early for a man whose duties had occupied him most of the preceding night, and he had visited the Avenue primarily to study possible business openings. However, in the interest of higher things, he was willing to delay this important matter. He admired the slender, graceful neck, the high carriage of the head, and the straight, true lines of the shoulders, but most of all he admired the confident, upward sweep of the smooth, brown locks with the golden lights. He was fascinated by the unruffled, shimmering convex which began at the tailored neck of the blue gown, and disappeared under the trim little hat. He became conscious of a desire to view its owner's face.

Miss Wallace turned. Mr. McCool saw.

"Dat," he declared, with a note of solemnity, "is real people. She's mine, she is."

And, having given utterance to this somewhat startling proposition, forthwith he departed for the public-house of Baltimore Jimmy McGann, wherein he drank three times to her loveliness, each time in the silence of profound re-

spect—thereby demonstrating that in some features the code McCool was superior to the code of some men who give bachelor dinners.

A new interest had come into the life of Spike McCool. He had never before felt that he loved, although the avenues which lie to the west and east of the avenues where the victorias drive had witnessed prodigal entertainment and manifestations of more or less affection tendered by the eminent young professional man to young women of high color and scenic millinery. He became neither buoyantly enthusiastic nor yet noticeably moody; he gladdened in no way his apparel, and he changed only in the smallest degree his manner of living, for his elementary nature had been affected but lightly by his active years of peculiar civilization. But he did become an habitué of the Avenue, where he idled long afternoons through in wait for the victoria. He rose betimes, that he might see Miss Wallace take her morning ride in the Park, and once he recklessly jeopardized his position—for he was not unknown to certain lynx-eyed private sleuths and limbs of the municipal law—that he might follow her into a big down-town shop, where she smiled at tired-looking saleswomen, and quickly reduced a smirking floor-walker in a fashion which, Mr. McCool decided, was a credit to that eminently satisfactory back hair. He learned that she lived in the big, gray-stone corner house which, he had formerly felt, merited his professional attention; that her father was a great man in railroads, which he sometimes built and sometimes destroyed; and that some day she was going to marry the blond little Oglesby. Mr. McCool sighed softly upon receiving this last bit of information, but it was not altogether a sigh of selfishness. He did not consider the match quite suitable.

He locked his new-found treasure of living tightly within his own breast, from which not even his brethren of a profession skilled in the extraction of guarded valuables were able to drag it forth. Only in minor ways, unno-

ticeable save to those who had the honor of his intimate acquaintance, did he give evidence of his possession. He did, it is true, display a marked aversion for the society of a certain young woman, at one time high in his favor—which puzzled her; and he did manifest a disagreement with certain social views long held by his business associates—which puzzled them; also, he developed a fondness for daytime loitering in a neighborhood ordinarily in favor with the gentlemen of his guild only after the falling of night—which puzzled everybody. But in the circles adorned by Mr. McCool there is marked prejudice against inquisitiveness, and the cause of these idiosyncrasies remained a mystery. In the end, however, he followed the custom of mankind these thousands of years. He confided in his nearest friend, Railroad Jack Pell, a gentleman of more or less esthetic tastes, and a tick-lifter of unquestioned ability.

To Railroad Jack, he pointed out Miss Wallace as she came down the steps of her father's dwelling.

"Jack," he announced, suddenly, "dat's me girl. Dat's de girl I love, an' I'm goin' to love her always."

Railroad Jack glanced quickly at his friend. Frank and open speech on deep and touchy affairs of the heart was not unusual in their own little division of society, but with such a declaration he expected to find the McCool face wreathed in smiles at the flash of McCool wit. McCool, however, was staring hard at that adorable back hair just settling itself above the carriage cushions. His features were set and tensely drawn. Railroad Jack looked puzzled, hesitated, then burst into a guffaw much noisier than those ordinarily enjoyed by gentlemen among whom noiselessness is considered not only a virtue but an asset.

"Ho-ho-ho!" roared Railroad Jack. "You—ho-ho—lovin' that!" said Railroad Jack, and shook with laughter.

"I love her," said Spike McCool, doggedly. He was not hurt by the

mirth of Railroad Jack. He had expected it. And still he gazed at the smooth brown hair.

Again, Railroad Jack quivered with emotion. He gurgled in his throat, and he thumped his chest with his hands. "Oh, Spike!" he gasped, "are yer clean daffy? Are yer all ratty? How do yer expect ter cop that? Say? How'n hell are yer go'n' ter win out with that?"

Spike McCool stared down the Avenue. The victoria had stopped. Little Oglesby, appearing out of the south, hat in hand, was about to enter the vehicle.

"I ain't goin' ter win out," he answered, slowly. "I ain't goin' ter cop nothin'. This ain't no lift game. I love her. I'm a-goin' ter love her."

Railroad Jack suppressed his laugh. The puzzled look came back to his face. "What d'yer mean?" he questioned. "What d'yer mean, Spike? Yer love her, an' yer can't cop her out, an' yer ain't kickin'? Why, what——?"

"I love her," said Spike McCool, with sudden fierceness. "This ain't no graft. I love her. I love her. I love her. Can't yer understan'? I ain't pikin'. I love her."

"Hell!" commented Railroad Jack.

Mr. McCool turned away. He had steeled himself against jocularity on the part of Railroad Jack, whose antecedents and upbringing had not been such as to endow him with the finer feelings and more delicate sense of appreciation; yet he found this lack of sympathy in his dearest friend an unpleasant thing. Besides, the brown head, with the blond pate of little Oglesby close beside, it was swiftly disappearing down the asphalted way. Railroad Jack grasped his arm.

"Say," he grinned, "maybe you're clean daffy, an' maybe yer ain't. Do yer know who dat is?"

"Sure," sighed Mr. McCool. The cherishing of a tender sentiment had mellowed his voice, but it had not seriously affected his practical workaday vocabulary.

"Know her old man?"

"Sure."

"Well, all I gotter say is dat his crib's goin' ter be cracked fer dust an' shiners, an' Tommy Curry's goin' ter do the job. Now chew on dat. I'm goin' fer a drink."

For an hour, Mr. McCool paced the Avenue in deep thought, unmindful of suspicious glances thrown in his direction by sundry stout gentlemen in blue clothing. He was suddenly confronted with a problem in ethics, perplexing even to a mind accustomed to consider and decide such matters with marked celerity. He knew that if Tommy Curry, whose skill and daring commanded such admiration from the powers of the commonwealth that they desired earnestly to entertain him for much time at a certain picturesque stone mansion on the banks of the historic river, had really determined to force entrance to the Wallace home for the purpose of removing therefrom such valuables as might be gathered without undue procrastination and vulgar disturbance, no power which might honorably be invoked could prevent him. His own code, somewhat different from those in general use—nevertheless, a code to whose clearly defined limits he religiously adhered—forbade that he should warn the inmates of the dwelling or send word to the big-mustached man who ruled at the little brick building with the green lights; yet, despite his years of education and his firmly fixed views on property rights, he could not consider with equanimity this invasion by one whose reputation rested largely on his readiness to take desperate measures in an emergency. He was conscious of real physical suffering when he considered what possibly might happen. The suffering was not in his heart, as might have been the case with a higher organism. It was in his stomach, which went sick and faint at the thought, but it was none the less acute and soulful. He clenched his hands within his pockets, and he bit viciously at his black cigar.

"He mustn't," said Spike McCool,

with determination. Then there flashed upon him a plan of action.

Far into the night, he sat opposite Tommy Curry at a battered table within the hospitable caravansary of Baltimore Jimmy, purchasing liquors with a frequency which won approval from both his host and his guest, and gently tinging his conversation with such deference and subtle admiration as to make his personality most acceptable to the famed Curry. That picturesque individual, low-browed and unshaven, raised his glass unsteadily, and blinked at the glittering incandescent.

"It's a go!" he announced. "I'm a-needin' some nervy cove in this job, an' you fit. This is no damned chowder party. It's a swell crib, plumb in the centre of Swelltown, an' the guy that turns th' trick's a fly guy—see? They's shiners an' dust enough there just now to set us both up, an' we're goin' ter get 'em. It's a go, even split—an' dead on th' square—see?"

"Dead on the square," echoed Mr. McCool with fervor, and silently emptied his glass with his eyes turned to the north.

Spike McCool had solved his vexatious problem, tangled though it had been with the strands of glowing brown. He had discovered that it was possible to live up to the noblest traditions of his profession, at the same time assuring the safety of his divinity in case of hasty action by the impulsive Curry. Briefly, Mr. McCool had decided that he had no right to interfere with the transfer of wealth from an individual so notoriously blessed with it as General Wallace to a brother of his own clan, but that he was morally bound to avert any danger which might threaten the daughter of that prominent citizen or those who were dear to her.

"Dere ain't," he reasoned, "no sense in sayin' th' old guy an' his crowd shouldn't be touched up, same as anybody else. He won't feel it, an' she won't care, an' I gotter be square wid

th' gang. But dere ain't no chlory dope ner gun-play in dis, an' dat's where I come in."

In the English of another class, Mr. McCool had arranged to be present at the removal of earthly goods from the Wallace home, and even to assist in said removal, but also to prevent dangerous drugging or more radical methods of silencing any members of the family who might seek to interfere. It was a nice adjustment of a trying situation. Mr. McCool smote his thigh in satisfaction.

Carefully following the direction of a discharged and bibulous butler, to whose acquaintance and revelations Mr. Curry was indebted for the inception of his daring scheme, they entered the convenient basement window at two o'clock of a frosty morning. Rubber shoes, deft fingers and a kindly consideration for the nerves of sleepers prevented the interruption of pleasant dreaming, and once, when Mr. McCool, experiencing some difficulty in forcing his sturdy person through the narrow orifice, grunted softly, Mr. Curry's scowl of displeasure became almost visible through the black handkerchief which covered his face. Aside from this, there were no unpleasant incidents to mark their silent passage to the upper regions. The professional pride of Mr. McCool was aroused. What few qualms had remained after his decision to join forces with his eminent colleague were lost in his keen enjoyment of the expedition, in which two lone soldiers of fortune ranged themselves fearlessly against a great city—aye, against a state, a nation, a world.

The big, lofty dining-room, into which the cautiously uncovered lantern cast a single, glowing, yellow ray, yielded them but scant store in silver. Mr. Curry piled the few obtainable pieces into his fleece-lined bag, gently tugged at doors and drawers in the buffet, and silently cursed the loquacious butler whose information had proven of so little value. Obviously the plate had been removed for the night to a location of greater security.

"Up-stairs," Mr. Curry growled, in

a low whisper. "Shiners an' dust up there. Ol' man an' ol' woman's away."

With lantern darkened, and resting just the tip of a rubber-clad foot on the edge of each step—it is thus that the conscientious artist circumvents the Machiavellian fiendishness of the creaking plank—they mounted the broad stairway. Down the hall they crept, Mr. McCool breathing hard despite the necessity for quiet as he came slowly to a full realization of the delicacy of his position. He almost gasped as they stole past a tightly closed door, for he remembered the hiccupped revelations of the butler, and he knew that just beyond that portal were strands of wondrous brown hair, captured and bound in the daytime, but doubtless now straying in dainty confusion on a white pillow to frame a face whose image seemed always before his eyes. Because, in the making, the soul of Spike McCool had been unfortunately mixed with that of a poet, he was often troubled with sentiment at times when business required his undivided attention. He recovered himself, and wished ardently that circumstances permitted indulgence in plug tobacco.

Carefully Mr. Curry shot a beam from his lantern into an empty room. It was big and square, with a mahogany dressing-table on the opposite side, littered with cut-glass and silver. A ponderous four-poster stood solemnly under a spreading canopy of frosty white. At the right showed a dressing-room. They crept in. Mr. Curry glanced quickly about. Then he dropped before a tiny safe set in the wall, and toyed noiselessly with its glistening knobs.

"Open!" he whispered, ecstatically, to the anxious Mr. McCool bending over him. "No drill. Cinch."

He swung the heavy door, plunged in his hand, and tossed out a packet of papers. He tried again, and held up a fat roll of banknotes. A red morocco box came next. He snapped the lid. Three rings and two big unset diamonds glowed within. He rummaged again, but there was no reward.

"They've got 'em with 'em," he moaned.

Those features of Mr. McCool visible below his mask assumed an expression of sympathetic grief.

A sigh came from the darkness of the dressing-room.

The slender beam from the lantern died in an instant, as Mr. Curry shot to his full height without the creaking of a joint.

Mr. McCool clutched his bag, and shivered. His courage had never been found wanting, but his active mind, working at that terrific speed which comes at the moment of a great crisis, could conceive no more bitter fate than his detection as a pilferer in the very temple of his goddess. Both men poised alert, silent and listening. Throughout all the great house there was silence.

Followed by Mr. McCool, Mr. Curry tiptoed to the dressing-room. An open door revealed a sleeping-room beyond. Again they paused. Then, with the cool daring which had won him the undying admiration of his fellow-laborers, the older man opened a crack of his lantern. This time his companion's gasp was almost audible.

Still and calm, her gentle breathing whispering softly through the stillness, one half-bared arm thrown out upon the coverlet, the lady of Spike McCool lay in slumber. A little bow of the faintest rose nestled in the filmy lace at her breast, another dash of rose showed at the ivory elbow, rose was the tone of the silken hangings and rose was the faint glow of her cheek against which lightly rested a single lock of soft brown hair.

Spike McCool trembled. His very breath caught in his throat. He longed for the outer air. He thought of the reeking back room of Baltimore Jimmy and the drink and the glare and the noise of the avenue to the west, and the women with the plumed hats and brightened eyes.

"O Lady!" said Spike McCool, very softly. "O Lady!"

Mr. Curry remained a strict utilitarian. He cast but a glance at the

figure in the canopied bed. His eye swept the broad table at his side. It bore little bottles with curious stoppers and boxes and brushes and odd-looking feminine things in profusion, and in the midst of these a simple heart of dull gold. His arm shot out, and he filched it from its resting-place. Then he slipped silently back into the big room of the safe, close beside the dazed Mr. McCool. Once more he slid the lantern, holding the locket in his big palm.

"Jes' fer a keepsake," he whispered, and opened the lid, thus forcing Mr. McCool, gazing over his shoulder, to look into the face of Mr. Wilfred Oglesby. Mr. McCool set his teeth.

With the gentle tenderness which always characterized his actions in affairs of this nature, Mr. Curry closed the door of the little safe, and stepped into the hall. Mr. McCool, with the bag in his hand, followed closely. He was glad that the foray was so close to a successful termination, without danger or violence, glad that he added somewhat to his earthly possessions without seriously jeopardizing his beloved liberty. Also, in a dull, aching way, he was glad that with bold, free daring, unmindful of the iron law, the golden-clasped portrait of the dancing, tea-drinking Oglesby had been torn from its shrine. Man to man, in a fight, he could crush Oglesby. He held his head higher at the thought. At least he was no dawdler, no—

"Stop where you are, or I'll shoot!"

The words were bold and clear, but the tone quavered. A door had suddenly flown open, letting out a flood of electric light. Before them, wide-eyed and quivering, a glittering revolver held before her, much as she might have held an ugly reptile, stood the girl. The pink bow fluttered at her bosom. Her glorious hair fell in masses over her white-clad shoulders. Of bravery, which is but the inheritance of a savage ancestry, she had little. Of courage, which is the child of mind and will, she had more than woman's share. She feared, but she was not afraid. She spoke as a ner-

vous child, steadily repeating a carefully memorized declamation.

"Burglars," she commanded, "give me my locket and you may go. Give me my locket—I saw you take it. Give me my locket, or I'll k-kill you."

Spike McCool shook as one with the ague. Of such was his descent that he knew neither fright nor fear, but he looked upon the beauty of another world, and he heard a voice such as seemed to him might be heard by dying men who had lived good lives. For the moment, he forgot that his very existence—more than that, his freedom—was imperiled, that there must be action swift and sure to save him. His spirit fled from him; he stood helplessly enthralled.

"My locket!" repeated the girl, dazedly. Spike McCool's head was swimming.

With a snarl like that of a wounded beast, Curry, the ever-ready, dashed his hairy fist against the outstretched ivory arm. The glittering revolver flew against the wall, and clattered to the floor, as Curry, dropping his bag of loot, dashed frantically for the stairs.

"Ah-h! my locket!" cried the girl, in a wild sob. "Wilfred!"

"It's all off!" whooped Spike McCool, the tension snapping, and, with a wild yell of delirious ecstasy, he threw himself at Mr. Curry just as that desperate man reached the head of the stairway.

With a crash and a curse in the darkness, they went rolling down the broad flight, writhing in each other's arms. Surprised, dismayed, frantic with fear, Curry clawed and bit in a frenzy, struggling desperately to reach his adversary's throat. With breath coming in hot gasps, his eyes flaming, his brain in a maddened whirl, but wildly exultant that at last his path lay straight before him, Spike McCool, unmindful of life, of liberty, of all things, save that he served the lady of his heart, grappled his erstwhile leader, and wound his stocky legs about the other's. They fell in a squirming mass on the floor of the

lower hall, a high-backed chair went over with a resounding crash, every bulb in the great candelabrum suddenly burst into light. The white-faced girl leaned far out over the balustrade.

"Help! help!" she called. "Jones, Barton, help! Burglars!"

"Leggo, you lunatic!" hissed Curry. "We'll be pinched!"

"Drop that locket!" gasped Spike McCool.

Heavy footsteps were running from the rear, the house was in an uproar. Some one was battering at the front door. Spike McCool tightened his grip, and laughed shrilly.

"Help! help! help!" called the girl.

The front door slammed against the wall as a fat patrolman, puffing, but full of fight, plunged in with nightstick raised. The club fell on the tousled head of Spike McCool. He sank, limp and unconscious, releasing his grasp on the furious Curry, as the policeman and a dazed man-servant hurled themselves upon him with a force which killed the curses on his lips.

"Got 'em both!" panted the patrolman to the roundsman who appeared in the doorway. "Scrapping for th' swag! Darndest thing I ever see. Git th' wagon."

The girl, with wondrous brown hair streaming over her kimono, slipped

down the stairway, to lift, with a little cry of relief, a locket of dull gold lying on the floor. Mr. McCool was slowly coming back to consciousness. The first gray streaks of dawn showed his face unshaven, hardened and coarsely seamed. His bullet head throbbed with pain. The irons on his wrist clinked a forecast of gloomy walls, hard toil and scant food, of maddening silence and dreary isolation from life, of black, utter loneliness. He groaned.

Miss Wallace held up the locket. It glistened in the first beam of sun. "It is their greed and avarice which bring the undoing of the criminal classes," she observed to the obsequious roundsman. "Had not this man"—she gazed at Spike McCool much as she might have inspected a new animal at the Zoo—"fought with his companion for the possession of this bit of gold, both might have escaped."

The pain was greater. Again the sufferer groaned.

"Ugh!" shuddered the girl, drawing her garment about her.

"It'll git him five years," grinned the roundsman. "Bet he's sorry enough fer fightin' now."

"O Lady!" whispered Spike McCool, in weak adieu, "I'm glad—I'm damn glad!"



ALL THE SAME

NELLIE—Did Archibald propose last night?

EMMA—No, but I made him think he did.



DON'T throw away the ladder by which you climbed; use it for kindling-wood.

THE RECURRENT DAY

I BEAR it when Autumn passes,
 With eyes that are sad as mine
 Cast down on her withered grasses
 That die in the cold sunshine.

I bear it when Winter lingers,
 And I may cower, caressed
 By passionless, chill, white fingers
 To numbness against her breast.

I bear it when blue skies darken
 To black on my window-pane,
 And I lean on the sill and harken
 The rush of the long Spring rain.

Storm stresses can still the yearning,
 And numbness can ease the ache;
 But I think in the red returning
 Of roses, my heart will break.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



NOT IN A POSITION TO KNOW

SHE—Your friend over there is a misogynist, is he not?
 HE (*a married man*)—No. He merely thinks he is. He has never been married.



HOW SHE REGARDED IT

SHE—Mr. De Sappie is in love.
 HE—That's a small matter. And, besides, it won't hurt him.
 "I suppose not, but it's pretty hard on the girl."



THE cynic is he who says of his fellows what they think of each other.

THE MATCH-BREAKER

By Mary L. Pendered

MILlicent PAULL'S black eyebrows were set in a straight line, and her lips were puckered in doubt. She shook her head over the letter she held in her hand, which, obviously, did not please her. After gazing out of the window, deep in thought, for several minutes, she opened the two closely-written sheets again, and read them through even more carefully than she had done before, as if to decipher some hidden message between the lines.

To the eye of sense it seemed a joyous epistle enough:

DEAREST: The letter I am going to write ought to be written from you to me, and the news I am about to relate should, by rights, be news of you to me! In fact, it seems almost indecorous in a spinster of my years to be sending such news, but you must attribute it to a slight aberration of intellect and fairly extenuating circumstances. I am—ahem!—please imagine a maidenly blush—*engaged!* Does this startle you sufficiently? Did you think such a thing could ever happen to me again? I did not. Never, since that sad time long past, have I felt tempted to spoil the lovely memory of my first romance by trying to repeat it—until now, and the temptation has been strong enough to sweep away the past altogether. It seems dreadful to be so fickle, doesn't it, Milly? And at my time of life, verging to the forties!

"Absurd! She is barely thirty-five," ejaculated Milly.

But I am sure you will say there is some excuse for me when you know the facts of my case. Briefly, they are these. My conqueror is Selcourt Unwin, whom you must have heard of as a writer of some distinction, though of no popularity. He likes everything I like; we are absolutely *one* in taste, and it is difficult to believe we have not known each other all our lives. He is a cousin of Lord Wyllard; not rich, nor likely to be, as the mere notion of money-getting revolts him—

"Dear me!" Milly made a grimace.

—cosmopolitan, polished, good-looking and thirty years of age. There's the inventory. I wish his years had been forty, but as neither of us was consulted in this matter, we can hardly be blamed for it! In conclusion, let me own that I am idiotically fond of the dear fellow, and I really think he is quite in love with me. He has told me all about himself, and says I am the most sympathetic woman he has ever met. Send me a sweet letter by return, giving your approval and consent. When will you come and be introduced?

Your loving,
KATHERINE.

"She *really* thinks he is *quite* in love with her." Milly said the words aloud with sarcastic emphasis on the adverbs. "Why 'really' and 'quite'? If any other words in the English language imply as much doubt as these, I've yet to learn them! And—h'm—'a writer of distinction though no popularity'—finds her sympathetic. Which means, being interpreted, that he's a disappointed scribe who wants to pour out his woes continually, and finds her an agreeable receptacle.

"'Money-getting revolts him'—that is to say, he would prefer to live on hers! I can see him; I know the type, and it's a type I despise. No man living is quite good enough for her, but I could find one better than this. She may marry a pauper, if she likes, as, thank goodness, her money is settled upon her, and there is plenty of it; but I am not going to see her throw herself away upon a whining failure, after refusing so many good fellows. And I'm not going to congratulate her till I've seen him, anyhow. I must run down at once and reconnoiter."

The result of these cogitations was a telegram as follows:

Best of wishes. May I come to-morrow?
MILLY.

She did not wait for the reply before preparing to go. Was she not always a welcome guest at Pinewood Cot? Her mother's youngest sister had been a second mother to Milly from the time she was born until she was old enough to keep house for her widowed father in London, so that the girl felt she had two homes.

Katherine Mayhew was but twelve years older than herself. The difference in age was hardly perceptible; their intercourse was that of devoted sisters, or very united friends, rather than the ordinary relation of aunt and niece. They had so much in common—the love of books, of country pleasures, of that world beyond things in which imaginative spirits delight to wander. And if Milly had formed a somewhat exaggerated conception of Katherine's beauty, goodness and cleverness, this was not entirely due to a girl's ardent idealism. Every one who knew Miss Mayhew declared her to be a charming and lovable woman, one of the rare kind that can win the hearts of men and women alike, without rousing either pain or envy.

When Milly saw her at the little station next day, she recognized afresh her extreme and even youthful attraction. Katherine was dressed all in white, and the fairness of her skin—it looked almost babyish under her veil—justified the girlishness of this attire.

When she exclaimed, joyfully, "Here you are, dearest child!" Milly retorted: "Child yourself! Aren't you ashamed to make me look so old?"

And, indeed, she might have been taken for the older of the two. For Milly had a dark and rather colorless skin, was very tall and a trifle angular; she was dressed in sober traveling gray, with a plain, rather unbecoming hat to match. They got into the victoria, talking as merrily as school-girls, and Milly drank in her aunt's beauty with dotting eyes.

It was a wonderfully sweet face her gaze rested upon, and looked as if nothing but exquisite thoughts could lie behind it. Softly rounded, delicately freckled a little at the temples, and with a tiny dimple in one cheek ever ready to deepen and suggest a second on the other side, it pleaded, without rebellion, against the claims of middle age, and the few, faint lines already etched about it seemed less the finger-marks of time than the signs of piquant humor and kindly mirth. Her throat was still round and smooth, her chin shapely as ever.

There was, however, a new expression on her face, a new sound in her voice, that disturbed Milly's peace of mind. In place of the old, bright look she knew so well, the girl saw a soft, dark shadow in her aunt's gray eyes, and heard a strange thrill in her ever-sweet tones. There could be no doubt that, whatever Katherine's lover might feel, Katherine herself was over head and heels in love, Milly thought, and this conclusion gave her a sharp stab of fear. "Oh, how he can hurt her!" she reflected, and the danger made her lips tighten savagely; "if he does—" She had not time to think out her revenge, for Katherine demanded her attention.

"He is coming to dinner, and you must tell me exactly what you think of him, darling. I am so anxious for your opinion. You will try to like him very much for my sake, won't you? It will spoil all my pleasure, if you don't. He is quite unlike any other man I have ever met. I think it was his wonderful originality, his aloofness, that first attracted me, but it might, of course, repel another person. Anyhow, he is not to be judged by ordinary standards. He is caviar—a taste to be cultivated, let us say!"

She laughed, but Milly detected nervousness in the laugh, and groaned in spirit. "The angel! How she loves him!" was her inward comment.

She dressed herself carefully to meet Mr. Selcourt Unwin; for Milly, in spite of her five-feet-ten and independent

character, was a really womanish woman, and liked to make a good impression on the masculine mind. She was handsome, too, with a devil-may-care manner fascinating to a certain type of man, and she was fond of wearing, in the house, clothes of positive color and distinctive fashion. On this occasion, she appeared in a clinging, silky crêpe of pure vermilion, embroidered in oriental shades of dark blue and gold. It was curiously effective, throwing up the clear hazel of her skin and the blackness of her hair. She smiled at herself in the glass as she twisted a rope of amber beads around her throat, and fastened a few passion-flowers in the loose folds of her bodice; and she went down-stairs with mischief curving the corners of her mouth.

Her first impression of Selcourt Unwin, as he came forward to be introduced, with a look of animated interest in his eyes, was distinctly favorable. Prejudiced against him as she was, Milly could not help admitting to herself that he was a personable man, at whom any woman would look twice, and with pleasure. Tall, slightly built and well-balanced, he carried his head proudly, and had a decided grace of manner, while his face, irregular in features, was made handsome by a pair of remarkably fine eyes and a captivating smile.

All this Milly noted as she sat opposite him at dinner, and she noted something more. His face was perplexing; it contradicted itself. For, while his smile was charming, the lines around his mouth were hard and peevish in repose, and the firmness of his chin was flatly denied by loose, weak lips. Even the strength of feeling suggested by deeply-set eyes met with opposition from a too-pretty arch of the eyebrows.

Conversationally, he was brilliant, beyond a doubt, and, as both Katherine and Milly were blessed with a sense of humor, the dinner went off in a continual sparkle of wit and laughter.

Katherine was delighted to see the two persons nearest her heart evidently interested in each other, and she did not for a moment suspect the purpose

of Milly's reckless gaiety, which was intended to throw Selcourt Unwin off his guard, and cause him to betray any original weakness she might hereafter use against him.

When dinner was over, they went into the conservatory, and there Milly pursued her policy by smoking a couple of cigarettes, much to Katherine's surprise, for she had not seen her smoke before. But it was part of the deep-laid design, and it succeeded. In the genial company of this apparently free-and-easy girl, Unwin let himself go without reserve, and talked—how he talked! Vivid as it all was, and interesting as the revelation of a personality by no means commonplace, Milly was not slow to recognize the fundamental qualities of cynicism, arrogance, self-deception and morbid vanity that lay beneath the flow of his caustic wit and eloquence. She drew him out with artful questions, searched the arid places of his soul, and probed his shallows ruthlessly; while the dear little aunt sat listening, her innocent eyes fixed upon her hero, and her whole heart lying so bare in her face that Milly dared not glance at it.

At last, she rose abruptly, and left the lovers alone together, declaring she was tired and could sit up no longer.

"I knew it!" she interjected, as soon as she was in her room; "I knew from her letter that he was an arrant, ramping, devouring egoist, in love with himself and with no other person on earth. All he wants is a listener, a beautiful face to look into, and a good, comfortable berth! To think of her being sacrificed to that Juggernaut! She'll never call her soul her own again. She'll never have a right even to *feel* anything on her own account any more. He'll grudge her the luxury of the least grumble, and jealously resent the idea that she *could* have any disappointment worth mentioning beside his. Lord! how he sneered at everything under heaven. One would think there did not exist a single publisher, editor or critic who was not at once rogue and fool; and the 'reading public,' according to him, should be con-

fined *en masse* in asylums for the imbecile. He reminds me of Hans Andersen's Beetle, who, after finding himself of no importance in the world, declared that it was an abominable world, and he was the only respectable person in it. What can I do with this human beetle? I can't let him marry Katherine. He would spoil her beautiful life, trail the slime of his disappointed pessimism over all her lovely enthusiasms, wither her with his discontent. No! The match must be broken off, and I must be breaker! But how?"

This was the perplexing problem that kept her awake till long after the hall door had closed on the cause of her exasperation. And when, just before daybreak, she dozed off into slumber, the only definite conclusion she had arrived at was that, first of all, she must dissemble.

II

THE dissembling began next morning. Long before the inevitable question was uttered, there were pleading interrogation points in Katherine's blue eyes, persistently ignored by Milly, who paid more than usual attention to her breakfast. At last, when the meal was almost over, Katherine said, in her cooing voice, toned with reproach:

"Darling, you haven't told me yet what you think of him."

Milly's answer was all ready, glib and positive:

"Dear, there couldn't be two opinions. He's brilliant."

"I think he is," observed Katherine, in a manner intended to appear disinterested. She looked at Milly for a continuance of praise, but it was not forthcoming, although the girl knew what was desired, and expected, of her. She longed to say, "I like him immensely; he's a real good fellow, and desperately in love with you;" but the triple lie would not pass her lips, untrained in such practice. She was clever enough to dissemble, to evade bare truth; but there is a step between such evasion and downright falsehood. This tacit refusal of hers caused a si-

lence for several minutes. Then Katherine went on:

"He has had a hard life, Milly; you don't know how hard, and how loveless. Throughout his career, he has been thwarted and blighted by every kind of disappointment and disillusion. Perhaps his ideals have been too high. I tell him so. I quote Browning to him—'What I aspired to be and was not, comforts me.' He ought to be satisfied with that. It is wonderful, I think, how he has managed to keep his aims lofty, his ambitions pure, through all the storm and stress of the sordid battle." Her voice sank to a low key of reverence.

Milly gave a vicious kick to a footstool under the table, and felt a little better for it. What ambition had Selcourt Unwin ever known, she thought, save the glorification of his own talents, the making of his name to shine before men? She was as unjust in her sweeping conclusions as young people generally are; for Milly had not yet developed the flabby, but useful, virtue of tolerance. She cast down her eyes now, and admitted that it was a great thing to have lofty ideals.

"He has told me all about his struggles and temptations," Katherine continued. "Milly, it is awful to think what a man has to go through, what a sensitive and passionate soul has to endure! If I can only"—her eyes grew suddenly alight with the flame of the zealot—"only smooth his way, be as a cloak and shield against the thorns of life and make him happy, I shall be, myself, the happiest woman in the world!"

"You will never make him happy," thought Millicent; "never. Nothing ever could. He prefers to be discontented and to regard the world as his enemy."

She said aloud: "Dear little cloak and shield! I can conceive no better fate than to have you between me and the thorns of life. Selcourt Unwin is a lucky chap. From all my heart I felicitate him."

"Me, too," begged Katherine, wistfully.

"Why, you don't expect me to think any human man quite good enough to be your husband, little Kat, do you?" said her big niece, tenderly. "It's a flat impossibility. Such a male has yet to be born, so it's no good waiting for him to grow up."

"I've waited long enough, haven't I?" said her aunt, smiling.

"What! Do you really flatter yourself you are grown up?" exclaimed Milly. "The only thing to be said of you is that you are as much so as you ever will be. I can see you, in my mind's eye, at eighty-nine just as you are now—a mere baby whom everybody wants to cuddle!"

Thus she slid over the dangerous ground with her usual loving nonsense. The rôle of elder had been played by her, more or less, since she had worn long frocks, but never had it seemed so appropriate as now, when she was really taking the part of an anxious parent toward a love-sick child. No school-girl of seventeen was ever watched more carefully than Katherine Mayhew, or more zealously guarded, during the days that followed—days in which Milly was maturing her plan of campaign as match-breaker.

In spite of this plan and the dissembling it necessitated on the part of its author, nothing disturbed the outward serenity of Pinewood Cot, and, to Katherine at least, the days of Milly's visit passed delightfully. In the innocence of her unsuspecting heart, she thought the girl had begun to fall under the spell of Selcourt Unwin's wondrous fascination, and was soon to become, like herself, a worshiper at his shrine. That Milly's pretended sympathy and thirst for information were but traps set to catch egregious self-revelations of the real man, never for one moment occurred to her.

And, just as she failed to see any flaw in her idol, or any attempt on Milly's part to expose his vanity and selfishness, so also she failed to perceive his growing interest in her niece. To any other eyes it might have been

apparent that Milly had succeeded in exercising a great attraction over Unwin. His gaze wandered after her incessantly, and it was to her he addressed his most elaborate flowers of rhetoric. He presented her with all his books, writing charming inscriptions on the fly-leaves, and evinced a keen anxiety to have her opinion on their contents. To Katherine, all this appeared the most natural thing in the world. He wanted Milly to like him and his work, because she was one of the family and they would hereafter see much of each other. Her nature was too sweet for suspicion, too pure for jealousy, too kind for envy.

But Milly knew what was happening, and her soul became a field of warring emotions. She triumphed and loathed herself, alternately. The obvious conquest filled her with horror, and yet it was what she had schemed for. Her vanity did not plume one feather; she had formed too poor an opinion of Selcourt Unwin for that. He was a man, she concluded, whose subjugation was no great honor to the victor. Given a moderate amount of beauty and the willing ear of an appreciative listener, any woman might capture his vagrant affection. Her aunt possessed beauty, charm, the willing ear, the faculty of adoring and, in addition to these qualities, the alluring bait of wealth. No wonder he had been fain to establish himself as Katherine's lover and prospective husband! The idea that he loved her did not enter Milly's head: she was so sure he could love only himself. But it was perfectly obvious that Katherine cared deeply for him, and in this fact lay the whole difficulty of the situation.

It became tragic as the days went on, and the girl would have given worlds to be out of it. But her courage was immense, and the thing resolved on had to be done without flinching. She regarded it as a painful, but necessary, operation upon her aunt's tender soul, and, shutting her eyes to all else, she drew Selcourt Unwin further and further into her toils.

At last, one day, when they were

alone, he kissed her hand, looking tenderly into her face the while. She shuddered inwardly, feeling as if the word "traitor" had been branded all over her body, but remained passive, with downcast eyes and a faint smile. He asked if he might call on her at home, and she consented. Might he come when her father was not there? he implored, for Katherine had suggested he should spend an evening with the Paulls, and make the acquaintance of her brother-in-law.

"Come next Tuesday afternoon. I shall be alone," said Milly.

Then she knew that she had burnt her boats, and there was no going back.

III

WHEN she heard his knock the following Tuesday, Milly's heart fluttered suddenly upward, and she felt sick with dread. The moment had come too soon; the deed had to be done now or never. She had dressed herself with special care for the scene, and the hectic glow in her cheeks enhanced her dark, fierce beauty. Her welcome was cordial, and as nearly tender as she could make it. She chose a seat well out of the window's light, and lay back among cinnamon-tinted cushions in her yellow gown, with parted red lips and shining eyes.

He sat down near her and, after telling her how charming she looked, drifted, as usual, into talk about himself. He spoke, with fluent enthusiasm, of his complex emotions and of his inner life, that life of the soul, which, he said, was so sacred that the mere mention of it seemed a profanation, and indeed could never be spoken of save to one of spiritual kindred. Milly might have felt flattered and impressed by the implied compliment had she not known that his holy of holies had been already thrown open to her aunt and, probably, to many other elective affinities.

She drew him on adroitly, however, and they were soon in that dangerous thicket of personalities from which it

is difficult for a man and woman to escape without a sentimental entanglement. Unwin started at first, in beautifully ambiguous prose, to speak of the "conscious ego, so isolated, yet so powerfully moved by invisible threads attracting it to other souls within its mysterious orbit. What are those threads?" he asked, "and what place have they in the web of design?"

All this, Milly knew to be the preliminary canter of sentiment, and she tried to look as intense as possible.

He was completely deceived by her manner, and set about applying these subtleties to the topic in hand—themselves. Had she not noticed, he inquired, on the day when they had first met, the faint thrill of another individuality impinging upon hers? Was she not suddenly aware of a new element in her life? Had she not been strangely conscious that a mysterious something had happened?

With her long lashes drawn, like blinds, over her eyes, and her mouth held firmly grave, Milly admitted that she had felt all these peculiar sensations. Her very blood seemed to stand still, waiting for his next words.

"As for me," he went on, nervously, "I knew at once you were to exercise a great influence over my fate, either for good or evil. And I fear it has been for evil. Oh, Milly!"

He seized her hand and kissed it, passionately. The conflagration had begun, and she was afraid of the flames, but went on fanning them desperately.

"What does this mean, Mr. Unwin?" she asked, in a tremulous voice, rising to her feet, unsteadily.

"It means—it means—" he breathed, gripping her hands; "don't you see what it means, Milly? Have you not guessed that I—I love you?"

"And my aunt?" she whispered, looking down.

His eyes fell. The fire sank a little, as he faltered: "I love her, too, of course—differently."

"Which of us do you wish to marry?" she murmured, with a side glance and a ravishing smile. Heaven

knew how she hated herself at that moment, with what sick loathing her heart trembled!

"You!" he cried, recklessly, and threw his arms around her in a convulsive embrace.

With all her strength—and it was not puny—Milly freed herself, and flung him half across the room, where he reeled against a chair.

"You brute!"

They stood face to face, panting, their eyes blazing with anger, their lips tightly drawn over teeth that seemed to snarl. As her blood mounted in a dark tide, he grew white as his collar.

"You are quite right," he said, at last; "I am a brute."

For the first time, Milly felt that there might be something in him worthy the title of manhood; that perhaps she had not wholly known, or fairly judged, him. As he stood before her now, without pose, ashamed, and yet not undignified in bearing, her dislike and distrust of him began to wane curiously; her scorn recoiled upon herself. Had she not rushed in where angels fear to tread, and played a horrible part? But she steeled her spirit against the reaction, and her next words were delivered with rising ferocity.

"Moreover, you are a fool," she said, "a pitiful, blind fool, to throw away the most beautiful, precious thing on earth when you have it in your hands. Don't you realize—you, who boast of knowing the world—what a rare treasure you have won? Do you dare to weigh anything in creation against the priceless gift of Katherine Mayhew's love? Do you think you will ever find anything like it again? She is the one woman in a million, lovely as she is clever, and clever as she is unselfish. There never was any one like her. Why, she might paper her room with offers of marriage! And she chose you—you, who are ready to jilt her! Oh, I cannot find words for my contempt of you!" Her voice broke.

"You are right," he said again, after a minute's pause. "I yield to no

man or woman in my profound admiration and love for Katherine, and I have been a fool. It is small consolation to know that I am not the first man who has been bewitched out of his sober senses by an unscrupulous and designing woman."

Milly's eyes flashed.

"The woman tempted me, and I did eat!" she quoted, with curling lips.

"Adam was the first to make a fool of himself," said Unwin, "and we have been doing it ever since, to serve your ends. Man's nature inclines him to respond to woman's invitation, even against his better judgment." Milly winced. "It is this fatal weakness that makes him such an easy prey. I congratulate you on your victory. It has been complete."

"You realize, then, my design!" she exclaimed.

"Certainly. You have planned to humiliate me, and have succeeded. The reason of your antagonism is the only thing that baffles me. What have I done to you?"

Milly hesitated one moment—no longer. The explanation had to be given, so why mince it? Looking full in his face with eyes that seemed to try to unravel every knot in his character, she spoke bluntly and without reserve.

"You have threatened the peace of one I love best in the world. My intention was, not to humiliate you merely, as you think, but to break off your engagement with Katherine. From the first, I knew you for a rampant egoist and cold-blooded cynic, who could only spoil her life, and I resolved to save her from you—that is all."

She was very conscious that he bore himself well under this assault. He met her gaze calmly, as he said:

"So you really think that a woman can be happy only with an altruistic man, that she would not rather consult her own taste than have the conventional 'good husband' chosen for her by her friends! Which would you prefer yourself?"

Milly was silent. He went on:

"You do not know Katherine if you imagine the ideal man necessary to her happiness. She has but two needs in life—to sacrifice herself and to adore some one else. Her power of idealization makes her independent of goodness in others, and if she has chosen to select me as the unworthy object of it, I fail to see what right you have to interfere. You do not flatter her judgment in assuming that she is incapable of managing her own love-affairs."

The justice of this contention struck Milly. She began to feel uneasy and foolish, but would not own herself defeated.

"Katherine's heart governs her judgment," she suggested, lamely.

"And is her heart of no consequence?" he retorted. "Have you not considered that the rôles of match-breaker and heart-breaker may be ultimately connected?"

"I refuse to discuss Katherine's heart with you," she said, forgetting that she had been the first to mention this delicate subject.

"Then perhaps you will inform me how you propose to carry out your scheme of destruction to its completion. So far, it has worked well, but I do not see the finish," he observed, quietly.

Milly drew a long breath. She was getting the worst of the encounter, and it was time to gather all her forces.

"It is for you to finish," she replied, "you, who have proved your worthlessness by a gross act of treason. I have formed no definite plan of action for you, and can but suggest that you go abroad at once, and, when there, write to Katherine saying that you have found a long-lost wife, or contracted

an incurable disease, or any other fable to make her believe the parting as inevitable as it is distressing to you. I cannot think of any other way—unless you have the courage to blow your brains out," she added, as an afterthought.

He smiled. "I haven't the courage, as you call it, and your plan does not commend itself to me at all. Shall I tell you what I am going to do?"

"If you please." She spoke impatiently.

"I am going to marry Katherine—and make her happy."

"Impossible! I forbid—I defy you to marry her!"

"If I do not, you must tell her the true reason why—or I will. She is too noble a woman to be deceived with trivial lies. Go to her and speak the truth now, if you dare. Finish your work, and—break her heart!"

Milly turned her head aside that he might not see her lips were trembling, her eyes full of tears. He waited for some minutes, but no answer came, and, presently, she heard the door close upon him. Then she sat down and wept.

Twenty-four hours later she received this letter:

DEAREST: Selcourt has just left me, and we have fixed the date for September tenth. Will that suit my precious bridesmaid? I have nothing left to wish for now, except to see her as absurdly happy as her loving

LITTLE KAT.

"And if he doesn't keep her so," the girl thought, fiercely, "I'll kill him!"

But he did. It was the only revenge he ever took upon Milly.



ADMONISHED

LOWSCADS (*despondently*)—I might just as well be dead. What good am I, anyway? Why, I believe that I've been refused by every girl in town!

HENPEKKE (*excitedly*)—Touch wood! touch wood, quick, or your luck will change!

MARGARET

HER voice was but a girlish voice,
Too weak to ride the swell
Of ocean waves or Winter winds—
How strangely it befell
That voice should laugh across the world,
To call a man from hell!

Her hand was but a little hand,
Not strong to bind or break;
It swayed nor sword nor sceptered right,
Earth's honors to remake—
Strange that its touch should smite a man
To knighthood for her sake!

Her life was but a simple life,
Unmarked the way she trod;
A little tale of loving days,
Sweet with the sun and sod—
So slight a thing to save a man
For hope, and home, and God!

MABEL EARLE.



RATHER STARTLING

“WELL, old man, did you see my wife?”
“Yes: but she wasn't dressed.”
“What the——?”
“Well, that's what she told me.”



THE WAY OF IT

“I AM raising side-whiskers,” said the Chronic Grouch.
“Why, I can't see them!” replied one of his very few friends.
“You could, if you looked in the right place. I am raising them on my brother-in-law. It isn't so much trouble, and I can watch them grow; and, besides, I've had a grudge against him ever since he permitted me to break into his family.”

THE WISDOM OF THE ROSE

“DO not wound me or I die,
 O my Love!” I heard him cry;
 “Cover all thy thorns with rose-leaves,
 Lest thy lover sigh.”

But I pressed my sharpest thorn
 Deep into his heart that morn;
 Though the pain I felt him suffer
 Left me, too, all torn.

And he died, as he had said,
 Desolate, uncomforted;
 And the kind old Terrene Mother
 Drank the drops he bled.

And I bloom alone on earth,
 Breathing perfume o'er its dearth;
 For I know the love that dieth
 Is of little worth.

ELSA BARKER



THE USUAL QUESTION

MRS. BRIDESLEY—Yes, I am really an old married woman now. I was married last June, you know.

PROFESSOR ABSENTMYND—To be sure, to be sure. And how many children have you?



AFFLICTION

SI MEDDERS—They say Hiram has the artistic temperament.

RUBE HAYSEED—Mercy on us, an' he jest got over the malaria!



“I SUPPOSE your wife always has the last word?”
 “With my wife there is no last word.”

THE DOUBLE ENTRY OF FATE

OR, THE BEAUTY, THE BORE AND THE BEAST

By Marjorie L. Carolin

UNFORTUNATELY, the Beauty thought she had a mind; therefore was she in a quandary. The Bore loved her, to the best of his ability, and the Beast wanted her, to the best of *his*, which was great, where wanting was concerned. Had the Beast really possessed a mind she would have decided on one or the other immediately. As it was, she devoted a good deal of time and thought to the problem as to which of them it was wiser for her to marry. She even went so far as to tabulate their advantages and disadvantages. The result was something like this:

BORE

He has money.
He has good looks.
He is amiable.
He is my slave.
He bores me.

BEAST

He has none.
He has none.
He is a devil.
He is my master.
He frightens me.

SEQUEL

So, being, in the eyes of the world, "a sensible girl," she married the Bore.

For one year she was happy. For the first time in her life she had everything that money could buy, and she forgot there was such a thing as Love.

The next year, she remembered. She began to pine for "soul sympathy," and became rather mystic and visionary in her views. She also wore a sad and far-away expression in her "soulful eyes." The Bore was troubled, but went on spoiling her—as fool Bore will.

In the third year, Beauty chanced to meet the Beast, and found in him the "soul sympathy" for which she pined. She decided she had missed all "the sweet, wild joy of loving," by neglecting to marry him.

So, being, in the eyes of the world, "a perfect fool," she married the Beast.

For one year she was happy. The Beast loved her, after a fashion, and she thought she loved him; hence, she forgot there was such a thing as Wealth.

The next year, she remembered. Her tastes became rather extravagant for the Beast's pocket-book; so, in the natural course of events, he took to the club and drink—as a means of economy. Eventually, he habitually neglected and frequently ill-treated his wife, as Beasts sometimes will.

In the third year, Beauty again met the Bore. She was forcibly reminded of all the desirable things she would have had had she married him. Incidentally, she became aware of "the even truth and gentleness" of his character.

At this juncture, the Beast decided to relieve the Bore of some of his encumbrances, in the shape of his wife and whatever jewels and other valuables she could lay her hands on. To this the wife lent her ready acquiescence, which was proof of the perfect "soul sympathy" which existed between them.

Shortly after the elopement, the Bore was accommodating enough to take an overdose of morphine. Unfortunately, he was so unreasonable as to leave his fortune to a home for inebrates. Perhaps he expected his conjugal successor would spend his last days under its inviting roof, and wished to make it as comfy as possible for him.

As soon as Beauty and the Beast were apprised of the Bore's timely demise, they contracted a civil marriage in the most progressive style. Subsequently, they lived a rather impecunious life, but one full of "broad interests" and "the joy of living."

MORAL—It is far more interesting to be chewed to pieces by a wild Beast than to be monotonously worried to death by a tame Bore, even if his cage be of gilt.

At this juncture, the Bore developed an unexpected sense of honor—unexpected because not particularly encouraged by the Beauty. He decided to hie himself to parts unknown, taking with him, of course, a broken heart for company. After he left, the Beauty plunged into the social whirl in order to drown "the tragedy of her life."

Shortly after the Bore's departure, the Beast was accommodating enough to fall from his cab in an "attack of vertigo." His skull was fractured. "The widow was prostrated with grief"—see morning papers. However, she was not too overcome to send a telegram, post-haste, to the "parts unknown." Shortly afterward, the Bore appeared, "quite unexpectedly."

As soon as the proper period of mourning had elapsed, the grief-stricken Beauty and the honorable Bore were united in the holy bonds of matrimony. Subsequently, they lived in humdrum enjoyment of the Bore's numerous and convenient money-bags.

MORAL—A tame Bore in a gilded cage is much safer than a wild Beast behind the regulation iron bars.



PUT OUT OF BUSINESS

ELSIE—She went shopping and lost her pocket-book.

CORA—Wasn't that terrible!

"Indeed it was. The pocket-book contained her transfer, and she had to walk home."



INVIDIOUS

TED—Speaking of marriage, Gayboy has his eye on a wife.

NED—Whose?

THE AWAKENING

By James Branch Cabell

*"And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath.
'Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,' he said, 'and the tale is yet
to run:*

By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer—what ha' ye done?"

—KIPLING.

"AND one thing," Professor Vartrey continued, with decision in his tone, "I wish distinctly understood, and that is, if she insists on having young men loafing about her—as, of course, she will—she will have to entertain them in the garden. I won't have them in the house, Agatha. You remember that Langham girl you had here last Finals," he added, disconsolately—"the one who positively littered up the house with young men, and sang idiotic jingles to them at all hours of the night about the Bailey family and the correct way to spell chicken. She drove me to the verge of insanity, and I haven't a doubt that this Stapylton person is quite as bad. So, please mention it to her, Agatha—casually, of course—that, in Fairhaven, when one is partial to either vocal exercise or—er—amorous dalliance, the proper scene of action is the front garden. I really cannot be annoyed by her, Agatha."

"But, my dear Cecil," his sister protested, "you forget she is engaged to the Earl of Pevensey. An engaged girl naturally wouldn't care about meeting any young men."

"H'm!" said the professor, drily.

Ensued a pause, during which he refilled and relighted an ancient and malodorous pipe.

This befell on a May afternoon as they sat upon the piazza of the Var-

trey home in quaint old Fairhaven, and Professor Vartrey—Professor of Greek and Modern Languages in King's College, which stands, as you are doubtless aware, at the western termination of Fairhaven's one street—waited until it should be time to meet his Junior German Class. And about them, the birds twittered cheerily, and the formal garden flourished as gardens flourish nowhere save in Fairhaven, and overhead the sky was a turkis-blue, save for a few irresponsible clouds that dappled it here and there like splashes of whipped cream. Yet, for all this, the professor was ill-at-ease, and care sat upon his brow.

Then, "I have frequently observed," he spoke, in absent wise, "that all young women having that peculiarly vacuous expression about the eyes—I believe there are certain misguided persons who describe such eyes as being 'dreamy'—are invariably possessed of a fickle, unstable and coquettish temperament. You may depend upon it, Agatha, that the fact that she contemplates purchasing the right to support a peculiarly disreputable member of the British peerage will not hinder her in the least from making advances to all the young men in the neighborhood."

Miss Vartrey was somewhat ruffled. "I am sure, Cecil," she remonstrated, with placid dignity, "that you know nothing whatever about her, and that the reports about the earl have prob-

ably been greatly exaggerated, and that her picture shows her to be an unusually attractive girl. Though it is true," Miss Vartrey conceded, after reflection, "that there are any number of persons in the House of Lords that I wouldn't in the least care to have in my own house. And the Bible does bid us not to put our trust in princes—and, for my part, I never thought that photographs could be trusted, either."

"Scorn not the nobly born, Agatha," her brother admonished her, "nor treat with lofty scorn the well connected. The very best people are sometimes respectable. And yet," he pursued, with a slight hiatus of thought, "I should not describe her as precisely an attractive-looking girl. She seems to have a lot of hair—if it's all her own, which it probably isn't—and her nose is apparently straight enough, and I gather she isn't absolutely deformed anywhere; but that is all I can conscientiously say in her favor. She is artificial. Her hair, now—it has a—a—well, you wouldn't call it exactly a crinkle or exactly a wave, but rather somewhere between the two. Yes, I think I should describe it as a ripple—I fancy it must be rather like the reflection of a sunset in a—a duck-pond, say, with a faint wind ruffling the water. For I gather that her hair is of some light shade—induced, I haven't a doubt, by the liberal use of peroxides. And this ripple, too, Agatha, it stands to reason, must be the result of art, for I have never seen it in any other woman's hair—never! Moreover," Professor Vartrey continued, warming somewhat to his subject, "there is a dimple—on the right side of her mouth, immediately above it—which speaks plainly of the most frivolous tendencies. I dare say it comes and goes when she talks—winks at you, so to speak, in a manner that must be very—er—annoying. That absurd little cleft in her chin, too——"

But, at this point, his sister interrupted him. "I hadn't a notion," said she, "that you'd even looked at the photograph. And you seem to have it quite by heart, Cecil—and some

people admire dimples, you know, and, at any rate, her mother had red hair, so Dorothy isn't really responsible, you see—but I didn't know you'd even looked at it."

For no apparent reason, Cecil Vartrey flushed. "I inspected it—quite casually—last night," he said, rather hastily. "Pray, don't be absurd, Agatha! If we were threatened with any other direful visitation—influenza, say, or the seven-year locust—I should naturally read up on the subject in order to know what to expect. And since Providence has seen fit to send us a visitor rather than a visitation—though, personally, I should infinitely prefer the influenza, as interfering in a lesser degree with my work—I have, of course, neglected no opportunity of finding out what we may reasonably look forward to. I fear the worst, Agatha. For I repeat, the girl's face is, to me, absolutely unattractive—absolutely!" The professor spoke with emphasis, and emptied the ashes from his pipe, and took up his hat to go.

And then, "It would be very odd," said Miss Vartrey, absently, "if you were to fall in love with her."

"I! I!" spluttered the professor. "I think you must be out of your head! I! I fall in love with that chit! Good Lord, Agatha, you are positively idiotic!" And the professor turned on his heel, and walked stiffly through the garden. But, when half-way down the path, he wheeled about and came back.

"I beg your pardon, Agatha," he said, contritely, "it was not my intention to be discourteous. But somehow—somehow, dear, I don't quite see the necessity for my falling in love with anybody, so long as I have you."

And Miss Vartrey, you may be sure, forgave him promptly; and afterward—with a bit of pride and an infinity of love in her kind, homely face—her eyes followed him out of the garden on his way to meet his Junior German Class. And she decided in her heart that she had the dearest and best and handsomest brother in the universe, and that she must remember to tell

him to buy a new hat. And then, at some unspoken thought, she smiled, a little wistfully.

"She'd be a very lucky girl if he did," said Miss Vartrey, apropos of nothing in particular; and tossed her shapely, grizzled head, in scorn. "An earl, indeed!" said Miss Vartrey.

But now, on looking back, I am grieved that I should have presented Cecil Vartrey to you in this unpleasant state of mind. In the normal business of life, you would have found him as patient and untruculent and long-suffering a man as ever guided fat-witted boys among the intricacies of Greek conjugation. You must remember, then, that an old custom is not lightly broken, and that, on this particular afternoon, the prospect of having a strange woman in his house had irritated him, had appalled him and—as I shrewdly suspect—had interested him not a little.

Why, for all he knew, she might expect him to talk to her! And what possible subject, pray, could he rationally discuss with a young person of undoubtedly frivolous and flirtatious tendencies? He thought with a sinking heart of a certain photograph upon his sister's writing-table—the photograph of a young person who lifted shadowy eyes toward you, and meditated always upon the advisability of smiling. And, at the thought of it, the poor man groaned as he strode through Fairhaven; and he reviled the iniquity of fate and the rash hospitality of his sister; and, afterward, he speculated as to what Her teeth were like when She actually did smile. Already, he thought of her in capitals, you see; and, after mature deliberation, he decided that they would probably be like grains of rice laid upon a pink rose-petal. Yes, they would very probably be like that!

And this is how it came about: Dorothy Vartrey, as the older inhabitants of Fairhaven will volubly attest, was always a person who did peculiar things. The list of her eccentricities

is far too lengthy for me to enumerate it here; let us simply say that she began it by being born with red hair—Titian reds and auburns were undiscovered euphemisms in those days—and, in Fairhaven, this is not regarded as precisely a ladylike thing to do; and she ended it, so far as Fairhaven was concerned, by marrying a man whose family Fairhaven knew absolutely nothing about. And in Fairhaven, where any tenure of respectability post-dating the Revolution is an unheard-of thing, you can readily conceive that this was regarded as a serious offense. But who was his great-grandfather? said Fairhaven; and there was a notable shaking of heads when Roger Stapylton very frankly confessed that he did not know.

He married Dorothy Vartrey, however, for all that, and carried her away from Fairhaven. And afterward came rumors that he was wealthy and was rapidly becoming more wealthy; and of Dorothy Vartrey's death at her daughter's birth; and of the girl's health and strength and beauty, and of her lavish upbringing—a Frenchwoman, Fairhaven whispered with bated breath, with absolutely nothing to do but attend upon the child. And then, little by little, a new generation sprang up, and, little by little, these rumors became more and more tenuous and infrequent, and, little by little, the interest they waked became more lax; and it was brought about, at last, by the insidious transitions of time, that Dorothy Vartrey was forgotten in Fairhaven. Only a few among the older men remembered her; some of them yet treasured, as these old fogies so often do, a stray fan or an odd glove; and in by-corners of sundry tough old hearts there lurked the memory of a laughing word or a glance or some passing grace that Dorothy Vartrey had accorded their owners when the world was young.

But Agatha Vartrey, likewise, remembered the orphan cousin who had been reared with her. She had loved the older Dorothy and, in due time, she wrote to her daughter—in stately,

antiquated phrases that astonished her not a little, I dare say—and the girl had answered. The correspondence flourished. And it was not long before Miss Vartrey had induced her distant cousin to visit Fairhaven—"which is," as Miss Vartrey wrote to her, "the ancestral and natural residence of all the Vartreys, and I cannot imagine how they can be willing to live anywhere else, for Cecil and I will be delighted to have you."

Cecil Vartrey, be it understood, knew nothing of all this until the girl was actually on her way to Fairhaven. And now, she was to arrive that afternoon, to domicile herself in his quiet house for two long weeks—this utter stranger, look you!—and upset his work, ask him silly questions, expect him to talk to her, and at the end of her visit, possibly, present him with some outlandish gimcrack made of cardboard and pink ribbons, in which she would expect him to keep his papers.

It is no wonder, then, that Professor Vartrey's class was allowed to skimp their work somewhat that afternoon, and that young Thurman's wild guess at the date of Wolfram von Eschenbach's birth passed unrebuked. It was at that moment that Cecil Vartrey heard the whistle of the incoming train.

However, "Gottfried von Strassburg, gentlemen," he continued, steadily, "while possessing undoubted poetical genius, is in ideals and high conceptions—"

And so on. He was in a very moist state of perturbation. It had just occurred to him that she would probably expect him to call her Dorothy.

Yet he came into his garden, later in the afternoon, with a tolerable affectation of unconcern. Women, after all, he assured himself, were necessary for the perpetuation of the species; and, resolving for the future to view these weakly, big-hipped, slope-shouldered makeshifts of Nature's with a larger tolerance, he cocked his hat at a devil-may-careish angle, and strode up the walk, whistling jauntily and

having, it must be confessed, very much the air of a sheep in wolf's clothing.

Then She came to him.

She came to him across the trim, cool lawn, leisurely, yet with a resilient tread that attested the vigor of her slim young body. She was all in white, diaphanous, ethereal, quite incredibly incredible; but as she came through the long shadows of the garden—fire-new, from the heart of the sunset, Cecil Vartrey would have sworn to you—the lacy folds and furbelows and semi-transparencies that clothed her were now tinged with gold, and now, as a hedge or flower-bed screened her from the level rays, softened into multitudinous gradations of grays and mauves and violets.

"You're Cousin Cecil, aren't you?" she asked.

And Cecil Vartrey noted, with a quick, delicious tingling somewhere about his heart, that her hair was really very like the reflection of a sunset in rippling waters—only many times more beautiful, of course—and, also, that her eyes were purple glimpses of infinity, and that her mouth was an inconsiderable trifle, a mere scrap of sanguine curves.

Then he observed that his own mouth was giving utterance to divers irrelevant and foolish sounds, which eventually resolved themselves into the statement that he was glad to see her. And immediately afterward, the banality of this remark brought the hot blood to his face and, for the rest of the day, stung him and teased him, somewhere in the background of his mind, like some incessant tiny insect. Glad, indeed!

I honestly believe that, before he had finished shaking hands with Dorothy Stapylton, it was all over with the poor man. I am aware that our heroes and heroines of fiction no longer fall in love at first sight; but Nature, you must remember, is too busily employed with other matters to have much time to profit by current literature. Then, too, she is not especially anxious to be realistic. She prefers to jog along in

the old rut, contentedly turning out chromo-lithographic sunrises such as they give away at the tea-stores, contentedly staging the most violent and improbable of Adelphi melodramas; and—sturdy old Philistine that she is—she even now permits her children to fall in love in the most primitive fashion. She is not particularly interested in subtleties and soul analyses, you see; and I dare say she merely chuckles rather complacently when a pair of eyes are drawn, somehow, toward another pair of eyes, and an indescribable something is altered somewhere in some untellable fashion, and the world suddenly becomes the most delightful place of residence in all the universe. It is her favorite miracle, this. For at work of this sort the old Philistine knows that she is an adept; and she has rejoiced in the skill of her hands, with a sober, workmanly joy, since Cain first went a-wooing in the Land of Nod.

So, Cecil Vartrey, without realizing in the least what had happened to him, on a sudden was strangely content with life. Yet, for all that, his shyness still clung to him, since an old custom is not lightly broken, although, after a little—or so he flattered himself—his dignity had returned to him.

"Er—h'm!" quoth he, professorial now, yet surely somewhat redder than was necessary.

"Only," Miss Stapylton was meditating, with puckered brow, "I can't possibly call you Cecil——"

"You impertinent minx!" cried he, in his soul; "I should rather think you couldn't!"

"—because Cecil sounds exactly like a nice dried-up little man with glasses and crow's-feet, you know. I—I rather thought you were going to be like that, and I regard it as extremely hospitable of you not to be. You're more like—like—" Miss Stapylton put her head slightly to one side and, for a moment, considered the contents of her vocabulary—"you're more like a viking. I shall call you Olaf," she calmly announced, when she had reached a decision.

This, look you, to the most dignified

man in Fairhaven—a man who had never borne a nick-name in his life. You must picture for yourself how the professor stood before her, big, sturdy and blond, and glared down at her, and assured himself that he was very indignant; like Timanthes, I prefer to draw a veil before the countenance I am unable to do justice to.

Then, "I have no admiration for the Northmen," he declared, stiffly. "They were a rude and barbarous nation, proverbially addicted to piracy and intemperance."

"Yes?" queried Miss Stapylton—and now, for the first time, he saw the teeth that were really very like grains of rice upon a pink rose-petal. Also, he saw dimples. "Does one mean all that by a viking?"

"The vikings," he informed her—and his class-room manner had settled upon him now to the very tips of his fingers—"were pirates. The word is of Icelandic origin, from *vik*, the name applied to the small inlets along the coast in which they concealed their galleys. I may mention that Olaf was not a viking, but a Norwegian king, being the first Christian monarch to reign in Norway."

"Dear me!" said Miss Stapylton; "how extremely interesting!" Then she yawned, with deliberate cruelty. "However," she concluded, "I shall call you Olaf, just the same."

"Er—h'm!" said the professor.

And she did. To her, he was Olaf from that day forth.

Cecil Vartrey called her, "You." He was nettled, of course, by her forwardness—Olaf, indeed!—yet he found it, somehow, difficult to bear this fact constantly in mind. At supper, for instance—dinner, in Fairhaven, is eaten at two in the afternoon—he fell a-speculating as to whether her eyes, after all, could be fitly described as purple. Wasn't there a grayer luminosity about them than he had at first suspected?—wasn't the cool glow of them, in a word, rather that of sunlight falling upon a wet slate roof? It was a delicate question, you see, an affair of

nuances, of almost imperceptible gradations; and in debating a matter of such nicety, a man must necessarily lay aside all petty irritation and approach it with unbiased mind.

He did. And when, at last, he had come warily to the very verge of decision, Miss Vartrey, in all innocence, announced that they would excuse him if he wished to get back to his work. He discovered that, somehow, they had finished supper; and, somehow, he presently discovered himself in his study, where eight o'clock had found him every evening for the last ten years. An old custom, you will observe, is not lightly broken.

Subsequently: "I have never approved of these international marriages," said Professor Vartrey, with some heat. "It stands to reason, she is simply marrying the fellow for his title. (That young Curtoys is invariably careless with his accents. I shall have to speak to him about it again.) She can't possibly care for him. (H'm! let us see if Liddell and Scott countenance that word. Ah, I thought not.) But they're all vain, every one of 'em. (Circumflex, Master Curtoys, circumflex, if you please, not acutel!) And I dare say she's no better than the rest."

Came a tap on the door. Came afterward a vision of soft white folds and furbelows and semi-transparencies and purple eyes and a pouting mouth.

"I'm so lonely, Olaf," the owner of these vanities complained. "Are you very, very busy? Cousin Agatha is about her housekeeping, and I got so lonely and—and I wanted to see the Gilbert Stuart picture," she concluded—exercising, I am afraid, a certain economy in regard to the truth.

This, as you can readily conceive, was a little too much. If a man's working hours are not to be respected—if his privacy is to be thus invaded on the flimsiest of pretexts—why, then, one may very reasonably look for chaos to come again. This, Cecil Vartrey decided, was a case for firm and instant action. This was a young

person who needed taking down a peg or two, and that at once.

But he made the mistake of looking at her first. And, after that, he lied very glibly. "Dear me, no! I'm not in the least busy now. In fact, I was just about to look you two up."

"I was rather afraid of disturbing you." She hesitated; and then a lucent mischief woke in her eyes. "You're so patriarchal, Olaf," she lamented. "I felt quite like a lion venturing into a den of Daniels. But if you aren't really, really busy—why, then, you can show me the Stuart, Olaf."

It is widely conceded, I believe, that Gilbert Stuart never in his after work surpassed the portrait which hangs now in Cecil Vartrey's study—the portrait of the young Gerald Vartrey, afterward the friend of Jefferson and Henry, and, still later, the author of divers bulky tomes pertaining for the most part to ethnology. The man smiles at you from the canvas, ambiguously—smiles with a woman's mouth, set above a very resolute chin, however, and with a sort of humorous sadness in his eyes. These latter, by the way, are of a very dark shade of blue—purple, if you will—and his hair is tinged with red.

"Why, he took after me!" said Miss Stapylton. "How thoughtful of him, Olaf!"

And, with a little gasp, Cecil Vartrey saw the undeniable resemblance. They were incredibly alike. And it gave him a queer sort of shock, too, as he realized, for the first time, that the faint blue vein on that lifted arm held Vartrey blood—held the same blood that at this thought quickened alertly. For, if he had ever considered it at all, I dare say he would have surmised that the vein in question contained celestial ichor or some yet diviner fluid.

"It is true," he conceded, "that there is a certain likeness."

"And he is a very beautiful boy," said Miss Stapylton, demurely. "Thank you, Olaf; I begin to think you are a dangerous flatterer. But he's only a boy, Olaf! And I'd always

thought of Gerald Vartrey as a very learned person with a nice fringe of whiskers all around his face—like a centre-piece, you know.”

The professor smiled a little. “This portrait was painted very early in life. Our relative was at that time, I believe, a person of—er—rather frivolous tendencies. Yet he was not quite thirty when he first established his reputation by his monograph upon ‘The Evolution of Marriage.’ And afterward, you will remember——”

“Oh, yes!” Miss Stapylton assented, rather hastily; “I remember perfectly. I know all about him, thank you. And it was that beautiful boy, Olaf, that—that young-eyed cherub who developed into that musty old man who wrote those musty old books, and lived a musty, dusty life all by himself, and never married or—or had any fun at all! Oh, how—how *horrid*, Olaf!” she cried, with a queer shrug of distaste.

“I fail,” said Professor Vartrey, somewhat stiffly, “to perceive anything—er—horrid in a life devoted to the study of anthropology. His reputation when he died was international.”

“But he never had any fun, Olaf!” she cried, with a quick flush. “And, oh, Olaf! Olaf! that boy could have had so much fun! The world held so much for him! Why, Fortune’s only a woman, you know, and she couldn’t have refused him anything if he’d smiled at her like that when he asked for it.” Miss Stapylton gazed up at the portrait, for a long time now, her hands clasped under her chin, her face gently reproachful. “Oh, boy dear, boy dear!” she said, with a forlorn little quaver in her voice, “how could you be so foolish? Didn’t you know there was something better in the world than grubbing after musty old tribes and customs and folk-songs? Oh, boy dear, how could you?”

Gerald Vartrey smiled back at her, ambiguously; and Cecil Vartrey laughed. “I perceive,” said he, “that you are a follower of Epicurus. For my part, I must have fetched my ideals from the tub of the Stoic. I can con-

ceive of no nobler life than one devoted to furthering the cause of science.”

She looked up at him, with a little, wan smile. “A barren life!” she said; “ah, yes, his was a barren life! His books are all out-of-date now, and nobody reads them, and it’s just as if he’d never been. A barren life, Olaf! And that beautiful boy might have had so much fun—ah, life is queer, isn’t it, Olaf?”

Again, he laughed. “The criticism,” he suggested, “is not altogether original. And Science, no less than War, must have her unsung heroes. You must remember,” he continued, very seriously, “that any great work must have as its foundation the achievements of unknown men. I fancy that Cheops did not lay every brick in his pyramid with his own hand; and I dare say Nebuchadnezzar employed a few helpers when he was laying out his Hanging Gardens. But time cannot chronicle these lesser men. Their sole reward must be the knowledge that they have added somewhat in the unending work of the world.”

Her face had altered into a pink-and-white penitence that was a little awed. “I—I forgot,” she murmured, contritely; “I—forgot you were—like him. Oh, Olaf, I’m very silly! Of course, it’s very noble and—and nice, I dare say, if you like it—to devote your life to learning as you and he have done. I forgot, Olaf. Still, I—I’m sorry, somehow, for that beautiful boy,” she ended, with a disconsolate glance at the portrait.

Long after she had left him, the professor sat alone in his study, idle now, and musing vaguely. There was no more correcting of exercises that night.

At last, he rose and threw open a window, and stood looking into the moon-lit garden. The world was a mist of blue and silver. There was a little breeze that brought him sweet, warm odors from the garden, together with a blurred shrilling of crickets and the stealthy conference of young leaves.

“Of course, it’s very noble and—

and nice, if you like it," he said, with a faint chuckle. "I wonder, now, if I do like it?"

He was strangely moved. He seemed, somehow, to survey Cecil Vartrey and all his doings with complete and unconcerned aloofness. The man's life, seen in its true proportions, dwindled into the merest flicker of a match; he had such a little time to live, this Cecil Vartrey, and he spent it all in writing little pamphlets that perhaps some hundred men in all the universe might care to read—pamphlets no better and no worse than hundreds of other men were writing at that very moment. The capacity for enduring work was not in him; and this incessant scratching of his pen, this incessant splitting of hairs over what this or that great man had meant, this incessant compilation of dreary foot-notes, this incessant rummaging among the bones of the mighty dead—did it, after all, mean more to this Cecil Vartrey than one full, vivid hour of life in that militant world yonder, where men fought for other and more tangible prizes than the mention of one's name in a scientific journal?

He could not have told you. In his heart, he knew that a thorough annotation of Isocrates must always rank as a useful and creditable performance; but, from without, the sounds and odors of Spring were calling to him, luring him, wringing his very heart, bidding him come forth into the open and crack a jest or two before he died, and stare at the girls a little before the match had flickered out.

They passed with incredible celerity, those next ten days—those strange, delicious, topsy-turvy days. To Cecil Vartrey it seemed afterward that he had dreamed them away in some vague Lotus Land—in some delectable country where, he remembered, there were always purple eyes that mocked you, and red lips that coaxed you now, and now cast gibes at you. You felt, for the most part of your stay in this country, flushed and hot and uncomfortable and unbelievably awkward, and you

were mercilessly bedeviled there; but not for all the accumulated wealth of Ormus and Ind would you have had it otherwise. Ah, no, not otherwise. For now, lifted to a rosy zone of acquiescence, you partook incuriously at table of nectar and ambrosia, and abroad noted, without any great surprise, that you trod upon a greener grass than usual, and that some one had polished up the sun a bit; and, in fine, you snatched a sort of fearful joy from the performance of the most common and trivial functions of life.

Yet always he remembered that it couldn't last; always he remembered that in the Autumn she was to marry the Earl of Pevensey. She sometimes gave him letters to post which were addressed to that nobleman. He wondered savagely what was in them; he posted them with a vicious shove; and, for the time, they caused him acute twinges of misery. But not for long; no, for, in sober earnest, if some fantastic sequence of events had made his one chance of winning Dorothy Stapylton dependent on his spending a miserable half-hour in her company, he couldn't have done it.

As for Miss Stapylton, she appeared to delight in the cloistered, easy-going life of Fairhaven. And Fairhaven, as to its trousered portion, fell prostrate at her feet, and, as to the remainder of its inhabitants, failed to see anything in the least remarkable in her appearance, and avidly took and compared notes as to her personal apparel.

"You have brought Asmodeus into Fairhaven," Cecil Vartrey one day rebuked her, as they sat in the garden. "The demon of pride and dress is rampant everywhere—er—Dorothy. Even Agatha does her hair differently now; and in church last Sunday I counted no less than seven duplicates of that blue hat of yours."

Miss Stapylton was moved to mirth. "Fancy your noticing a thing like that!" said she. "I didn't know you were even aware I had a blue hat."

"I am no judge," he conceded, gravely, "of such fripperies. I don't pretend to be. But, on the other hand,

I must plead guilty to deriving considerable and harmless amusement from your efforts to dress as an example and an irritant to all Fairhaven."

"You wouldn't have me a dowd, Olaf?" said she, demurely. "I have to be neat and tidy, you know. You wouldn't have me going about in a continual state of disorder and black bombazine like Mrs. Rabbet, would you?"

Cecil Vartrey debated as to this. "I dare say," he at last conceded, cautiously, "that to the casual eye your appearance is somewhat—er—more pleasing than that of our rector's wife. But, on the other hand——"

"Olaf, Mrs. Rabbet isn't a day—not a day!—under forty-nine. And you consider me *somewhat* better-looking than she is! Thank you!" said she, with a fine dignity.

He inspected her critically, and was confirmed in this opinion.

"Olaf"—coaxingly—"do you really think I am as ugly as that?"

"Pouf!" said the professor, airily; "I dare say you're well-enough."

"Olaf"—still more coaxingly—"do you know you've never told me what sort of woman you most admire?"

"I don't admire any of 'em," said Professor Vartrey, stoutly. "They're too vain and frivolous—especially the pink-and-white ones," he added, unkindly.

"And you never, *never*—cared—for any woman, Olaf?"

Precarious ground, this! His eyes were fixed upon her now. And hers, for doubtless sufficient reasons, were curiously intent upon anything in the universe rather than Cecil Vartrey.

"Yes," said he, with a little intake of the breath; "yes, I cared once."

"And—she cared?" asked Miss Stapylton, not looking at him, however.

"She!" Cecil Vartrey cried, in very real surprise. "Why, God bless my soul, of course she didn't! She didn't know anything about it."

"You—you never told her, Olaf?"—and this was very reproachful.

But Professor Vartrey laughed aloud. "Ah!" said he; "it would have been a brave jest if I'd told her, wouldn't it? She was young, you see, and wealthy, and—ah, well, I won't deceive you by exaggerating her personal attractions! I'll serve up to you no praises of her sauced with lies. And I scorn to fall back on the stock-in-trade of the poets—all their silly metaphors and similes and such-like nonsense. I won't tell you, with Propertius, that her complexion reminded me of roses swimming in milk, for it didn't—not in the least. Nor am I going to insist, with Ovid, that her eyes had a fire like that of stars, nor proclaim, with Tibullus, that Cupid was in the habit of lighting his torch from them. I don't think he was. Ah, I'd like to have caught him taking any such liberties with those innocent, humorous, unfathomable eyes of hers! And they didn't remind me of violets, either," he pursued, argumentatively, "nor did her mouth look to me in the least like a rosebud, nor did I have the slightest difficulty in distinguishing between her hands and lilies. I consider these hyperbolical figures of speech extremely idiotic. Ah, no!" Cecil Vartrey cried, warming to his subject—and regarding it, too, very intently; "ah, no, a face that could be patched together at the nearest florist's wouldn't haunt a man's dreams o' nights, as hers does! Ah, no, I haven't any need here for praises sauced with lies! I scorn hyperbole. I scorn exaggeration. I merely state—calmly and judicially—that she was God's masterpiece—the most beautiful and adorable and indescribable creature that He ever made."

She smiled at this. "You should have told her, Olaf," said Miss Stapylton. "You should have told her that you—cared."

He gave a gesture of dissent. "She had everything," he pointed out, "everything the world could afford her. And, doubtless, she'd have been very glad to give it all up for me, wouldn't she?—for me, who haven't youth or wealth or fame or anything?"

For me! Ah, I dare say she'd have been delighted to give up the world she knew and loved—the world that loved her—for the privilege of helping me correct Greek exercises!" And Cecil Vartrey laughed again, though not very mirthfully.

But the girl was staring at him, with a vague trouble in her eyes. "You should have told her, Olaf," she repeated, very gravely. And at this point he noted that the arbutus-flush in her cheeks began to widen slowly, until, at last, it had burned back to the little pink ears, and had merged into the coppery glory of her hair, and had made her, if such a thing were possible—which it manifestly was not—more beautiful and adorable and indescribable than ever before.

"Ah, yes!" he scoffed, "Fairhaven would have made a very fitting home for her, wouldn't it? She'd have been very happy here, wouldn't she?—shut off from the world with us dreamers—with us, whose forefathers have married and intermarried with one another until the stock is worthless, and impotent for any further achievement? For here, you know, we have the best blood in America—and that means the worst blood. Ah, we may prate of our superiority to the rest of the world, but, at bottom, we're worthless. We're worn out here, I tell you!—we're effete and stunted in brain and body, and the very desire of life is gone out of us! We're content simply to exist here. And she—" He paused, and a new, fierce light came into his eyes. "She was so beautiful!" he said, half-angrily, between clenched teeth.

The girl smiled. "You're like the rest, Olaf," she lamented, with a hint of real sadness. "You imagine you're in love with a girl because you happen to like the color of her eyes, or because there's a curve about her lips that appeals to you. That isn't love, Olaf, as we women understand it. Ah, no, a girl's love for a man doesn't depend altogether upon the angle that his nose makes with his forehead."

"You fancy you know what you're talking about," said Cecil Vartrey,

"but you don't. You don't realize, you see, how beautiful she—was."

And this time, he had nearly tripped upon the tense, for her hand was on his arm, and, in consequence, a series of warm, delicious little shivers was running about his body in a fashion highly favorable to extreme perturbation of mind.

"You should have told her, Olaf," she said, wistfully. "Oh, Olaf, Olaf, why didn't you tell her?"

She did not know, of course, how she was tempting him; she did not know, of course, how her least touch seemed to waken every pulse in his body to an aching throb, and set hope and fear a-drumming in his breast. Obviously, she did not know; and it angered him that she did not.

"She'd have laughed at me," he said, with a snarl; "how she would have laughed!"

"She wouldn't have laughed, Olaf." And, indeed, she did not look as if she would.

But, "Much you know of her!" said Cecil Vartrey, somewhat morosely. "She was just like the rest of them, I tell you! She knew how to stare a man out of countenance with big purple eyes that were like violets with the dew on them, and keep her paltry pink-and-white baby face all pensive and sober, till the poor devil went stark, staring mad, and would have pawned his very soul to tell her that he loved her! She knew! She did it on purpose. She'd look pensive just to make an ass of you! She—" And here Cecil Vartrey set his teeth for a moment, and resolutely drew back from the abyss. "She wouldn't have cared for me," he said, with a shrug. "I wasn't exactly the sort of fool she cared for. What she really cared for was a chuckle-headed fool who could dance with her, and send her flowers and sweet-meats, and make love to her glibly—and a petticoated fool who'd envy her fine feathers—and, at last, a knavish fool who'd barter his title for her money. She preferred fools, you see, but she'd never have cared for a visionary fool like me. And so," he ended, with a

vicious outburst of mendacity, "I never told her, and she married a title and lived happily ever afterward."

"You should have told her, Olaf," Miss Stapylton persisted, very gently; and then she asked, in a voice that came very, very near being inaudible: "Is it—is it too late to tell her now, Olaf?"

The stupid man opened his lips a little, and stood staring at her with hungry eyes, wondering if it were really possible that she didn't hear the pounding of his heart; then his teeth clicked, and he gave a despondent gesture. "Yes," he said, wearily, "it's too late now."

Thereupon, Miss Stapylton tossed her head, and pouted somewhat. "Oh, very well!" said she; "only, for my part, I think you've acted very foolishly, and I don't see that you've the least right to complain. I quite fail to see how you could have expected her to marry you—or, in fact, how you can expect any woman to marry you—if you won't, at least, go to the trouble of asking her to do so!"

Then Miss Stapylton went into the house, and slammed the door after her.

Nor was that the worst of it. For when Cecil Vartrey followed her—as he presently did in a state of considerable amaze—his sister informed him that Miss Stapylton had retired to her room with a rather unaccountable headache.

And there she remained for the rest of the evening. It was an unusually long evening. Yet, somehow, in spite of its notable length—affording, as it did, an excellent opportunity for undisturbed work—Professor Vartrey found, with a pricking conscience, that he made astonishingly little progress in his monograph on the Greek Verbals.

Nor did he see her at breakfast—nor at dinner. And it was on that day that Cecil Vartrey—to the immense gratification of his Senior French Class, who were then reading "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*"—corrected young Thurman somewhat sharply and himself translated "*Belle marquise, vos*

beaux yeux me font mourir d'amour" as "Beautiful marquise, your purple eyes cause me to die of love."

A curious little heartache accompanied him on his way home that afternoon. He had not seen her for twenty-four hours, you understand; and he was just beginning to realize what life would be like without her. He did not find the prospect exhilarating.

Then, as he came up the orderly graveled walk, he heard, issuing from the little vine-clad Summer-house, a rather loud voice. It was a man's voice, and its tones were angry.

"No! no!" the man was saying; "I'll agree to no such nonsense, I tell you! What do you think I am—a fool?"

"I think you," spoke Miss Stapylton's voice, crisply, "a very unfortunate specimen of a people I have always admired. And you call yourself an English gentleman!" she went on, with a scornful lift of speech. "Ah, God pity England if her gentlemen were of your stamp! Why, there isn't a costermonger in all Whitechapel who'd have dared talk to me as you have done!"

"Well, I've had provocation enough," the man's voice retorted, sullenly. "Perhaps, I have cut up a bit rough, Dorothy, but, then, you've been talkin' like a fool, you know. Let's kiss and make up, old girl."

"Don't touch me!" she panted; "ah, don't you dare!"

"You little devil! you infernal little vixen! You'll jilt me, will you?"

"Let me go!" the girl cried, sharply.

Cecil Vartrey went into the Summer-house.

"Ah, no," the man was saying, "that's precisely what I don't intend to do. Ah, no, my lady, I don't intend—" And here he broke off, suddenly, for Cecil Vartrey had tapped him on the shoulder.

The man was big and loose-jointed, with traces of puffiness about his face. He had wheat-colored hair and weakish-looking, pale-blue eyes. One of his arms was about Miss Stapylton, but he released her slowly now, and blinked at Cecil Vartrey for a moment.

"Who're you, pray?" he demanded, querulously. "What do you want, anyhow? What do you mean by sneakin' in here and tappin' on a fellow's shoulder—like a—like a damn' wood-pecker, by Jove! I don't know you."

There was in Professor Vartrey's voice a rather curious tremor, when he spoke; also, he was very white, and his lifted forefinger—lifted in his stiff, classroom manner—shook visibly. You might have thought him confronting some hapless undergraduate who had followed a preposition with the wrong case.

"I am the owner of this garden," he enunciated, with precarious distinctness, "and it is not my custom to permit gentlewomen to be insulted in it. So, I am afraid I must ask you to leave it."

"Now, see here," the man blustered, weakly, "we don't want any heroics, you know. See here, you're her cousin, ain't you? By God, I'll leave it to you, you know! She's treated me badly, don't you understand. She's a jilt, you know. She's playin' fast and loose——"

He never got any further, for at this point, Cecil Vartrey took him by the coat-collar and half-dragged, half-pushed him through the garden, shaking him occasionally with a certain quiet emphasis. He was angry for the first time in his life, was Cecil Vartrey, and it was a matter of utter indifference to him that they were trampling over innumerable flower-beds, and leaving havoc in their rear.

But when they had reached the side-entrance, he paused and opened it, and then ushered his companion into an open field, where a number of cows, fresh from the evening milking, met them with incurious eyes. It was very quiet there save for the occasional jangle of the cow-bells and the far-off piping of the frogs in the marsh below.

"It would have been impossible, of course," said Cecil Vartrey, "for me to have offered you any personal violence so long as you were, in a manner, a guest of mine. This field, however,

is the property of Judge Willoughby, and here I feel at perfect liberty to thrash you."

Then he thrashed the man who had annoyed Dorothy Stapylton.

That thrashing was, in its way, a masterpiece. There was a certain conscientiousness about it, a certain thoroughness of execution—a certain plodding, painstaking carefulness, in a word, such as is possible only to those who have spent years in guiding fat-witted boys among the intricacies of Greek conjugation.

"You ought to exercise more," Cecil Vartrey admonished him, when he had ended. "You're entirely too flabby now, you know. That path yonder will take you to the hotel, where, I imagine, you're stopping. By the way, there is a train leaving Fairhaven at six-fifteen, and if I were you, I would be very careful not to miss that train. Good evening. I'm sorry to have been compelled to thrash you, but I must admit that I've enjoyed it exceedingly."

Then he went back into the garden.

In the shadow of a white lilac-bush, he paused, with an awed face. "Good Lord!" said he, aghast at the notion; "what would Agatha say if she knew I'd been fighting like a drunken hod-carrier! Good Lord, what *wouldn't* she say! Only, she wouldn't believe it of me. And, for the matter of that," Cecil Vartrey continued, after a moment's reflection, "I wouldn't have believed it of myself a week ago. I think I'm changing, somehow. A week ago I'd have fetched in the police and sworn out a warrant against that cad; and, if the weather had been as damp as it is, I'd have waited to put on my rubbers before I'd have done that much."

He found her still in the Summer-house, expectant of him, it seemed, her lips parted a little, her eyes glowing strangely. Cecil Vartrey, looking down into their cool depths, for a breathing-space, found time to rejoice that he had refused to liken them to stars. Stars, forsooth!—and, pray, what pal-

try sun, what irresponsible comet, what pallid, clinkered satellite might boast a purple splendor such as this? For theirs, at best, was but a clap-trap brilliance, the brilliance of a penny squib slightly exaggerated; whereas, the glow of her eyes was a matter worthy of really serious attention.

"What have you done with him, Olaf?" the girl breathed, quickly.

"I reasoned with him," said Cecil Vartrey, with extreme gravity. "Oh, I found him quite amenable to reason. He's leaving Fairhaven this evening, I think."

Thereupon, Miss Stapylton began to laugh. "Yes," said she, "you must have—reasoned with him. Your tie's all crooked, Olaf dear, and your hair's all rumpled, and there's dust all over your coat. Oh, I'm glad, *glad* you—reasoned—that way! It wasn't professorial, but it was dear of you, Olaf. Pevensey's a beast."

He caught his breath at this. "Pevensey!" he stammered; "the Earl of Pevensey!—the man you're going to marry!"

"Dear me, no!" Miss Stapylton answered, with the utmost unconcern; "I'd sooner marry a toad. Why, didn't you know, Olaf?" she cried, happily. "Why, I thought, of course, you knew you'd been introducing athletics and better manners among the peerage! Dear me, that sounds like a bill in the House of Commons, doesn't it?" Then Miss Stapylton laughed again, and appeared to be in a state of agreeable, though somewhat nervous, elation. "I wrote to him two days ago," she afterward explained, "breaking off the engagement. So he came down at once and—and was very nasty about it."

"You—you've broken your engagement," he echoed, dully; and continued, with some lack of finesse, "but I thought you wanted to be a countess?"

"Oh, you boor, you—you vulgarian!" the girl cried. "Oh, you do put things so badly, Olaf! You're hopeless." She shook an admonitory, pink-tipped forefinger in his direction, and pouted—pouted, in the most dangerous fashion. "But he always seemed

so nice," she reflected, with puckered brows, "until to-day, you know. I thought he'd be eminently suitable. I liked him tremendously until—" and here, a wonderful, tender change came into her face, a wistful little quiver woke in her voice—"until I—I found there was some one else I liked better."

"Ah!" said Cecil Vartrey.

So, that was it—yes, that was it! Her head was bowed now—her glorious, proud little head—and she sat silent, an abashed heap of fluffy violet frills and ruffles, a tiny bundle of vaporous ruchings and filmy tucks and such-like vanities, dimly discerned through the green dusk of the Summer-house. But he knew. He had seen her face grave and tender in the twilight, and he knew. She loved some man—some lucky devil! Ah, yes, that was it! And he knew the love he had unwittingly spied upon was august; the shamed exultance of her face and her illumined eyes, the crimson banners her cheeks had flaunted—these were to him as some piece of sacred pageantry; and before it his misery was awed, his envy went posting to extinction.

Thus the stupid man reflected, and made himself very unhappy over it.

Then, after a little, the girl threw back her head and drew a deep breath, and flashed a tremulous smile at him. "Ah, yes," said she; "there are better things in life than coronets, aren't there, Olaf?"

You should have seen how he caught up the word! "Life!" he cried, with a bitter thrill of speech; "ah, what do I know of life? I'm only a recluse, a dreamer, a visionary! You must learn of life from the men who have lived, Dorothy. I haven't ever lived. I've always chosen the coward's part. I've chosen to shut myself off from the world, alone with my books, and my writings, and my smug vanities, and Agatha to pamper them. I've affected to scorn that brave world yonder where a man is proven. And all the while, I was afraid of it, I think. I was afraid of you before you came." At the thought of it, Cecil Vartrey laughed as he fell to pacing up and down before

her. "Life!" he cried, again, with a helpless gesture; and then smiled at her, very sadly. "Didn't I know there was something better in life than grubbing after musty tribes and customs and folk-songs?" he quoted. "In sober earnest, Dorothy, I did not until you came. But I know it now. I know that I've bartered youth and happiness and the very power of living for the pleasure of grubbing after just such things, and spoiling good paper with my scrawling concerning them. I thought knowledge the chief end of life, you see. It isn't. All the learning in the world isn't worth a single heart-beat, I know, for I have a deal of learning, child, as men will tell you. Ah, yes, I can inform you quickly enough how this man lived and that man died, and when and where they did it. I know what this man wrote of life, and what another thought of life, and what still another guessed of life. But of life, itself, I know nothing. I haven't lived."

He paused. I don't say that he had spoken wisely, but his outburst had, at least, the saving grace of sincerity. He was pallid now, shaking in every limb, and in his heart there was a dull aching. She seemed so incredibly soft and little and childlike, as she looked up at him with wide, troubled eyes.

"I—I don't quite understand," she murmured. "It isn't as if you were an old man, Olaf. It isn't as if——"

But he had scarcely heard her. "Ah, child, child!" he cried, harshly; "why did you come to waken me? I was content in my dream. I was content in my ignorance. I could have gone on contentedly grubbing through my musty, sleepy life here, till death had taken me, if only you had not shown me what life might mean! Ah, child, child, why did you waken me?"

"I?—I?" she breathed; and now the flush of her cheeks had widened, wondrously.

"You! you!" he cried, and gave a hard wringing motion of his hands, for the reserve of a shy man is not torn away without agony. "Who else but you? I had thought myself brave enough to be silent, but still I must

play the coward's part! That woman I told you of—that woman I loved—was you! Yes, you, you!" he cried, again and again, in a sort of frenzy. And then, on a sudden, Cecil Vartrey began to laugh. "It's very ridiculous, isn't it?" he demanded of her. "Yes, it's very—very funny. Now comes the time to laugh at me, my lady! Now comes the time to lift your dainty brows, and make keen arrows of your eyes, and of your tongue a little red dagger! I've dreamed of this moment many and many a time, my lady! Laugh, I say! Laugh, for I've told you that I love you. You are rich, and I'm a beggar—you are young, and I am old, remember—and I love you, who love another man! For the love of God, laugh at me and have done—laugh! for, as God lives, it is the bravest jest that I have ever known!"

But she came to him, with a wonderful little gesture of compassion, and caught his great, shapely hands in hers. "I—I knew you cared," she breathed. "I—I've always known you cared. But, oh, Olaf, I didn't know you cared so much. You—you frighten me, Olaf," she pleaded, and raised a somewhat tearful face to his. "I'm very fond of you, Olaf, dear. Oh, don't think I'm not fond of you." And the girl paused for a long, breathless moment. "I—I think I might have married you, Olaf," she murmured, half-wistfully, "if—if it hadn't been for one thing."

Cecil Vartrey smiled now, though he found it a difficult business. "Yes," he assented, gravely, "I know, dear. If it wasn't for that other man—that lucky devil! Yes, he's a very, very lucky devil, child, and he constitutes rather a big 'if,' doesn't he?"

Miss Stapylton, too, smiled a little. "No," said she, "that isn't quite the reason. The real reason is—is, as I told you yesterday, that I quite fail to see how you can expect any woman to marry you, if you won't go to the trouble of asking her to do so."

And, this time, Miss Stapylton did not go into the house.

DINNER FAVORS

By Arthur Macy

TO S.

I FILL my goblet to the brim,
And clink the glasses rim to rim.
Across the board I waft a kiss,
With thanks for such an hour as this;
And clasping joy, bid sorrow flee,
And welcome you, my vis-à-vis.

TO A. R. C.

Of all the joys on earth that be,
There is no sweeter one to me
Than sitting with a merry lass
From consommé to demi-tasse.

And yet a golden hour I'd steal,
Reverse the order of the meal,
And, countermarching, backward stray
From demi-tasse to consommé.

TO S. B. F.

Give me but a bit to eat,
And an hour or two,
Just a salad and a sweet,
And a chat with you.
Give me a table full or bare,
Crust or rich ragoût;
But, whatever be the fare,
Always give me you.

THE HOST

Between the two perplexed I go,
A shuttlecock, tossed to and fro.
I gaze on one, and know that she
Is all that womankind can be;
I seek the other, and she seems
The perfect idol of my dreams;
And so between the charming pair
My heart is ever in the air.
And yet, although it be my fate
To hover indeterminate,
I rest content, nor ask for more
Than this sweet game of battledore.

A LOVER'S VALENTINE

HOW shall I shape a lyric meet for her
 Who doth my heart ensnare?—
 Give me the rillet's first ecstatic stir
 While yet the dales are bare,
 The liquid note some feathery worshiper
 Breathes on the twilight air!

Filch me the dews that prism the morning's breast;
 The noonday's golden ore;
 And from behind the hilltops of the west
 The sunset's glowing core,
 That I may mold, with all a lover's zest,
 Some radiant metaphor!

Distil for me the rose's sweetest scent,
 The lily's attar fine,
 And the aroma rare and redolent
 Of clove and jasmine-vine,
 That I may prison them, may know them pent
 In my enamoured line!

And yet, though woven with all art my song,
 And all felicity,
 Still shall I fear to do my love a wrong,
 Since it doth seem to me
 No attributes unto the earth belong
 One-half so fair as she!

SENNETT STEPHENS.



DELICATE

MADGE—What was that pretty compliment her fiancé paid her?
 MARJORIE—Although she had been twice divorced, he asked her if she
 wouldn't like to have the marriage ceremony rehearsed.



"SINCE Sadie has married she has more lovers than ever."
 "That's natural. She leads a lonelier life."

AN IMPOSSIBILITY

By Frank Savile

“WHO is the man who has just come in?” asked Lord Gilforth.

Palke turned in his chair, and looked behind him. As it was not the season, the great dining-room of the Hôtel de la Plage was nearly empty, and he soon recognized his man.

“Von Ausslich, of the Austrian Home Office,” he answered, fixing his eyes on a sallow, elaborately dressed individual at a distant table. He nodded violently to attract the newcomer’s attention.

For the moment, the Austrian’s gaze was concentrated on the menu, but, as he raised his head to give the waiter his commands, he caught Palke’s eye. He hesitated, blinked through his pince-nez, and then rose to come forward with outstretched hands and a beaming face.

“My friend! You of all people in this desert!” He thrust two fingers into Palke’s grip, and wagged them ecstatically. “And what can have brought *you* here in this desolate month of May?”

“My companion’s yacht,” said Palke, drily, and introduced Gilforth. Von Ausslich frothed civilities, which the other met stolidly. He had taken a dislike to Palke’s friend, but could make no demur when it was suggested that the three might as well share one table. Von Ausslich’s napkin and glass were transferred to the Englishman’s corner, while their owner was exuberant in his delight over having met congenial company under such unexpected circumstances. He was full of his woes in having been dragged to the Adriatic littoral in the desolation of the Spring.

“Why have you come, then?” asked Gilforth, bluntly.

“You may ask it, my friend! Why, indeed! Because, for the moment, they have made me a policeman!”

“A policeman!”

Von Ausslich nodded, with his mouth full.

“You have heard of Svirnai?” he asked, at last. “Svirnai—the Republican, the Anarchist?”

“Of course,” said Palke. “We saw that he was being tried at Vienna. We haven’t seen a paper since we put in at Fiume. Has he been condemned?”

“Condemned!” spluttered the Austrian. “Naturally, he has been condemned! What are trials for but to condemn scoundrels?”

“In England, we have a simple way of holding them merely to obtain justice,” said Gilforth. “I forget what he was supposed to have done.”

“Done!” exploded von Ausslich. “Is it not enough that he has preached treason for five-and-twenty evil years? Is there to be no limit to the liberties he takes with his wicked tongue?”

“Apparently there is, as you have condemned him,” said Palke. “But what has all this got to do with your being at Abbazia?”

The other laid an impressive finger upon the table.

“Because to me, my friend, to me was given the task of escorting him to his new residence. No common prison will do for villains of that class; their friends are too active. This very day I have left him in the charge of the governor at Sfaxola. If he escapes from there, it will be by flying alone—I swear it!”

Gilforth, who had lighted a cigarette, sent a cloud of smoke spinning toward the ceiling, and grunted.

"There never was a prison built, yet," said he, "that a prisoner could not escape from, if he and his friends really meant business."

Von Ausslich laughed, confidently.

"You have never seen Sfaxola," he cried. "Satan himself cannot pluck a prisoner from out it without the governor's permission. It is impossible!"

"That's a big word," said Gilforth.

The other slammed his glass upon the table.

"I repeat it!" he cried. "I repeat it! An absolute impossibility!"

Palke broke in with a warning.

"You are playing with edged tools," said he. "Gilforth is just the pig-headed man to spend the best years of his life proving you wrong."

"Let him try!" declaimed the Austrian. "Sfaxola is impregnable. I declare it!"

"It's against my principles to pass a challenge to my self-respect," said Gilforth. "Shall we make it a wager?"

"A wager, a bet?" clamored von Ausslich. "I should rob you. I do not joke—the thing is absolutely, utterly impossible!"

"And I, without seeing Sfaxola, am willing to bet one thousand English pounds that Svirnai leaves it within a year."

Von Ausslich looked appealingly at Palke.

"What am I to say?" he asked. "It would be dishonorable to take him."

"If you want to lose one thousand pounds, take it," said Palke, drily. "If not, refuse."

The Austrian flushed.

"In that case, I take you, monsieur le marquis, and I do it with a light heart. I wager one thousand pounds that Svirnai, if he be still alive, is a prisoner in Sfaxola one year from to-day. Is that correct?"

"Quite correct," said Gilforth, jotting the terms down in his note-book, "and the winner stands the loser a dinner in a place to be hereafter named."

Those were practically the last words exchanged on the subject till von Ausslich departed to catch the midnight train and the other two to go on board their yacht.

"I met Svirnai in London once," said Gilforth, suddenly, as they waited on the Plage for the dingy, "and I thought him a very decent chap."

Palke was not an early riser, and though he felt the yacht get under way in the dawning, he did not come on deck till some hours later. Gilforth was coming up the accommodation ladder from the launch, having evidently been ashore. He nodded to his friend, and then made a comprehensive gesture toward the cliff and the little white town that nestled beneath it.

"Sfaxola!" he explained.

Palke saw an island-like crag, about six hundred feet high, connected with the shore by a narrow isthmus which was topped by a causeway of hewn stone. It was crowned by a ramparted octagon of masonry, pierced with embrasures. The cliff sank from the bastions sheer into the blue. The little town climbed the hill behind it in terraces among groves of olive and *nespoli*. There was evidently no approach to the citadel save by the causeway, which was about half the breadth of an ordinary highroad. The cliffs, which were of granite, overhung in places, and were without the vestige of ledge or cranny.

"Something of a nut to crack?" ventured Palke, after a pause.

"Do you see the depth of water below the cliff?" said Gilforth, irrelevantly, as it seemed; and Palke examined the sapphire calm.

"And do you note the swampy vegetation round the river mouth?" went on Gilforth, pointing ashore; and Palke said that it looked feverish.

"It does," agreed his friend, "but my inquiries have informed me that it means fogs also. In November, they tell me, you cannot always see your hand before your face."

"What else have you found out?" asked Palke.

"A good many things: that the fortress is absolutely shut off from outside communication, except by leave of the governor; that ships are not allowed to anchor within half a mile—not within two miles at night; and that the political prisoners have the cells on the seaward face of the cliff, which is five hundred and eighty feet high."

"Anything else?" inquired Palke.

"That's all, for the present. Do you want to see this thing through?"

"Of course. When?"

"I'll let you know in due course. The understanding is that the affair is to be mentioned to no one—for that matter, I don't want to discuss it even between ourselves. Do you accept that?"

Palke had been the witness of some of Gilforth's escapades before. As he once phrased it to an intimate, "the man's romances are too good to skip or to look at the end," and in this spirit he agreed willingly.

He had heard no further allusion to the imprisoned anarchist when the *Sea Swallow* anchored in the Solent a fortnight later.

During the Summer no word came from Gilforth. Three months passed, and the shooting-season was in full swing before Palke got his message. Then it took the form of a curt telegram.

"Meet me at Southampton on Tuesday," wired Gilforth; and Palke sent back a brief acceptance.

The two friends met cordially, but Gilforth showed no sign of breaking their compact. When Palke saw the yacht's top-hamper taken in twenty-four hours after they had steamed past the Needles, when he saw her raking spars brought down, her rigging loosened, her decks left unscrubbed, and a man dropped over the stern to paint out the name *Sea Swallow* and substitute *May Fly*, he felt inclined to ask questions, but rigidly abstained. The funnel had been razed ten feet, and, by reason of its squatness, covered the deck with smuts. Palke, removing one, for the fiftieth time, from

his eye, showed some pardonable irritation.

"It's more like a river tug than a gentleman's yacht," he sneered. But Gilforth merely laughed.

Below, too, there were alterations. New bulkheads of steel divided the boat into water-tight compartments, while strong, steel shutters replaced the old dead-lights. The port-holes were glazed with enormously thick glass. But what was most obvious was the change of crew. Gilforth kept his men, as a rule; yet, with the exception of Evans, the skipper, and Murchison, the engineer, the stokers and deck-hands were foreigners—a thing that grated against Palke's insular instincts. He wondered whether Gilforth meditated a raid, and had hired a few professional desperadoes; but the absence of arms and ammunition seemed against it. In the want of all evidence, he could only await developments.

It was dusk about fifteen days later when they sighted the rocky cape of Sfaxola, and Gilforth pointed out to his friend a thick, stubby craft, with fighting-tops, that lay off the town.

"An Austrian gunboat for a certainty," said he. Palke, after using the glass, agreed with him.

"Von Ausslich has been working that little reception," said Gilforth, without, however, adding any comment as he went to dress for dinner.

During the meal, he was in the highest spirits, discussing anything and everything, save the adventure before them, so that by dessert-time Palke was extremely restless. He was just wondering how he could hint what a devouring thing his curiosity was becoming, when Gilforth rose from his chair.

"Now, let us go and fetch our friend, Svirnai," said he.

Palke, upon this, determined to keep up his incurious position to the last. He merely nodded back, stolidly, and followed his friend upon deck.

In the companionway, Palke knocked his shin against a hard object, swore,

looked down, and found a neat row of cast-iron cylinders arranged in front of the pantry door. He suggested, rather caustically, that such things were out of place, and inquired their use. Gilforth merely grinned, and said that they had a great future before them. Evidently, the time of explanations was not yet.

When he went on deck, Palke noticed that the riding-lights and mast-head lantern were burning very low, even though a dense fog surrounded them. He remarked on it.

"They are only oil to-night," said Gilforth. "We have had to disconnect the dynamo;" for the yacht was usually lighted by electricity.

Another thing noticeable was that the ship was desperately low in the water, so much so that Palke asked whether they had sprung a leak.

"Something of the kind," said Gilforth, with a twinkle, and turned to speak to two of the sailors—Italians these.

They listened, saluted, and separated right and left. The whole of the remainder of the crew, Palke was amazed to see, followed him and Gilforth, as the latter led the way down the main hatchway.

At the stair foot Evans stooped, removed the carpet, discovered a ring, and, by its means, raised a trap-door. Grinning and bowing, Gilforth ushered his friend into the depths below, where again they were followed by the crew, save and except the two Italian deckhands left above. Palke, still utterly at a loss, heard the whizz of sea-cocks, followed by the clang of machinery that moved without steam. At the same instant, he felt the descending motion that one associates with lifts.

Gilforth breathed a thankful sigh.

"Now we're off!" said he, smiling complacently into Palke's face.

A few moments later, the machinery slowed, halted, was reversed. This time the motion was that of an ascent. Palke's brain began to whirl. He pinched himself excessively to assure himself that he was not the leading actor in a nightmare.

The one dim lamp that had been their sole illumination was extinguished by Gilforth's orders. He took his friend by the arm, and led him to one of the ports.

"There's the dear old *May Fly*, late *Sea Swallow*," said he, and began to roar with laughter, for Palke's imperturbability was utterly shattered.

Not thirty yards away, riding comfortably at her moorings, was the very yacht on which Palke believed he stood, the *Sea Swallow*, a little blurred by the fog, but as recognizable as a photograph!

The skipper gave another order. Again there followed the sinking motion, though this time not so perpendicularly. Palke saw the surface of the water rise gently across the sheet of plate glass, and then distinctly heard the ripple and wash of it close overhead! Gilforth chuckled loudly.

"Yes," said he, simply, "we are in a submarine!"

Palke began to stammer incoherently in his desire for explanations, but his friend cut him short.

"You see, it was this way," said he. "I have reconnoitered here since last May, and my investigations showed me that this was the one and only way. One could not anchor an ordinary craft below the cliff—the regulations forbid our being even within two miles. On the other hand, I could not have navigated an ordinary submarine into these waters without exciting suspicions. So I went up to Tyneside, and explained what I wanted. I had the superstructure of the *Sea Swallow* built over this steel tortoise in Holland's private yard. What you saw yonder, riding at anchor, was that same superstructure, with great sinkers of lead hung outboard to keep it steady. And though she has no hull worth mentioning, her lights are lit, her watch is kept, and no one can tell that she isn't what she pretends to be."

Palke had regained his self-possession. He nodded.

"Yes," he agreed.

"But suppose, in the course of the

evening the pratique people pay you a visit? What then?"

"Then the two brave men that we have left patrolling her decks will explain that owner, master and crew are ashore enjoying themselves."

"And when the hunt is up—though I haven't yet the ghost of an idea how you are going to climb those cliffs—what will those same two men do tomorrow?"

"Long before that they will be peaceful loafers ashore, with friends who know and understand. And Svirnai, with the rest of us, will be half-way to Venice, which is our next port of call."

"Are we making for the cliffs then?"

"As fast as the propeller will take us."

"And how, in this blackness, will you be able to tell when you are within half a mile, or half a yard, of them?"

"By the electric radiators which spread fore, aft, and below us," said Gilforth, glibly. "They will ring up directly we get within fifty yards of contact. Any more questions?"

Palke shook his head. He was by no means very happy, but he was a good deal comforted by the completeness of the arrangements. This was evidently no haphazard adventure.

"You seem to have worked it out pretty thoroughly," he remarked.

"To the very last hook and eye," Gilforth assured him. "And the men who have worked with me make no mistakes." At that moment, one of the radiator bells rang.

The engines were slowed, stopped, and reversed. The boat rose gently to the surface. A couple of the crew slid back the steel hatchway, noiselessly, and let in a rush of fresh air. Gilforth motioned Palke on deck.

There was a space of only about ten square yards of plating left unsubmerged, and Palke—in telling me the story afterward—said that it was one of the most eerie moments of his life as he stood there surrounded by sea and fog, with the mighty crag of Sfaxola rising out of the calm at his very elbow. How matters were to continue he had

not the faintest notion, so waited patiently for events.

They lowered two anchors silently into the depths, and moored the boat fore and aft against the rock. Then more of her water ballast was pumped out, and she rose a couple of feet, to show the greater part of her deck. A few moments later, Palke heard a great rustling in the darkness of the companionway, followed by a sharp, long drawn hiss. Gilforth chuckled.

"Now for the wings!" said he.

His versatility had so impressed Palke, that he felt as if he should not be in the slightest degree surprised to see Evans hand them up through the hatchway. Instead of that, the rustling and the hissing increased, and something began to protrude from the companionway, blocking it entirely.

"What's all that hissing?" demanded Palke, excitedly.

Gilforth laughed again.

"It's coming from those cylinders you barked your shin over," said he. "They are filling the balloon with gas!"

"Good heavens!" stammered Palke, his presence of mind utterly broken down by this new development, while the great, rustling mass in the hatchway grew like some monstrous mushroom. It rose and expanded yard by yard till finally a huge, sausage-like tube waggled out into the open, and swayed against the cliff, dragging at a rope that anchored it to a small windlass in the hull below. Gilforth busied himself in attaching a plain deal board to the netting around it, to serve, apparently, for a seat.

At that, Palke woke out of his trance of amazement.

"You great fool!" he expostulated, "you're not going to risk your neck strung to that! Before you're a hundred feet up it will tear and rip against the cliff, and send you toppling down to smash out your brains on these steel decks!"

"You needn't worry yourself about that," said Gilforth, coolly. "I told you this thing had been thoroughly thought out. Look here."

He pointed, as he spoke, to Murchison and three of his underlings who appeared on deck carrying long, rounded sheets of fine wire netting. They began to lock these round the gas bag with a deliberation which bespoke a good deal of previous practice.

"Aluminum," explained Gilforth. "Strong, but light as a feather. The balloon has a capacity to carry six hundred feet of rope, myself, and a couple of good, businesslike files. Now do you understand?"

"Then how is it going to bring Svirnai down too?" asked Palke.

"One at a time," said Gilforth. "What is to prevent it coming back for me when they have hauled him in? Is all ready?" he asked the engineer.

"All ready, my lord," said Murchison, stolidly. He clasped a rope round Gilforth's waist as the latter seated himself upon the board.

The aeronaut looked at Palke with a grin. Then he waved his hand. The windlass creaked rapidly, the rope paid silently out, and Gilforth passed up into the fog without a sound save the light rasp of the aluminum casing against the stone.

Palke was left standing with his mouth open, the picture of amazement, till the engineer's voice recalled him to himself.

"I misdoubt if his lordship has gas enough," said he. "The pull is getting less and less."

"I hope to goodness the bag doesn't leak," said Palke; but just then the rope, which had begun to loop suspiciously from the drum of the windlass, tightened with a jerk. Murchison breathed a sigh of relief.

"He's made a landing," he whispered, thankfully.

The story of what happened above, Palke could tell me only from what he learned of Gilforth and Svirnai afterward, and they are both rather taciturn men. It was as follows:

Gilforth had ascended at exactly the right spot by a means simple enough. Svirnai had been communicated with by some method known to the Anarchist Brotherhood, and had been in-

structed, after each meal, to fling the remainder of his food and drink out of the barred casement of his window. He had done this till an obvious stain appeared on the rocks below.

In order that there should be no possibility of mistake, one of the Brotherhood resident in Sfaxola had crept out one night, and chiseled a cross upon the stain exactly beneath Svirnai's window. Gilforth had found this at the very commencement of his undertaking.

What Gilforth had miscalculated was the sustaining power of the gas. As the rope lengthened, its weight necessarily increased, and the balloon began to weaken. It mounted more and more slowly, and finally stopped, swaying, five yards below the spot where the rock ended and the masonry of the fortress began. Svirnai had been warned to let a white rag flutter from his window every foggy night in October and November, and Gilforth could just catch a glimpse of the signal twenty feet above his head.

There seemed only one thing to do to increase the lifting power of the balloon, and Gilforth did it. He deliberately unlocked the lower section of the casing round the gas-bag, and flung it out into the air. The balloon went up with a rush as the wire splashed gently into the sea below. The next instant, he was clutching the casement bars and wringing the hand which Svirnai thrust out to greet him. They lost no time. Each of them took a file and had the rusted iron through within five minutes.

So far as Palke could make out, they wasted another five in deciding who should descend first. Then Gilforth, who was a burly man, seized the little Hungarian, and absolutely bundled him through the window. He fixed him on the seat, and shook the rope violently to let those below know that they were to haul in.

Svirnai went down into the fog, protesting vehemently in German. He whispered a last word of warning: "Whatever you do, don't delay an instant when the balloon returns. I

am visited every hour, these nights," and so passed out of sight.

Even Gilforth owns that his sensations when he was left alone in that cell were not pleasant. He guessed that the balloon must be leaking, as the failure of the gas had been evident. The unprotected part from which he had torn the casing might rend and leak still more. Over and above this particular peril was the danger of discovery, unless he was gone within a very limited period. He leaned out of the casement, staring into the fog, and cursing his men below his breath. For the balloon did not return.

This was hardly the fault of his sailors. Svirnai could not speak a word of English. Neither Palke nor Evans knew Czech or German. They misunderstood the excited gestures that Svirnai lavished on them, imagining, as well they might, that he was imploring them to put more gas into the balloon. It was obvious that it was leaking, for the atmosphere reeked around it. They got up two more cylinders as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, Gilforth, full of wrath and imprecations, heard measured steps coming along the gallery toward his cell. He shot out one last oath as the balloon still lagged in its coming, stepped back into the darkness, and crouched behind the door. He heard the fumbling of keys, saw the panels move back, and had driven his fist against the incomer's temple—all within the space of a second.

Unfortunately, the jailer made no small outcry as he was floored, and far away, down the corridor, came the answer of a shout. The sound of hasty footsteps followed. Swords jangled from the belts of men who ran.

At this moment, the balloon sagged up against the window.

Gilforth darted for it like a rabbit from a burrow. He was immediately half poisoned by the smell of escaping gas, while the first pressure of his hand upon the seat demonstrated to him that the sustaining power was nothing like sufficient, and was getting less.

While he hesitated, two men clattered into the cell behind him.

Gilforth caught a glimpse of uniforms, heard an exclamation as the soldiers stumbled over the body of the jailer, and then did the one thing left for him to do. He cut the restraining rope from below the seat of the balloon.

The next minute he went staggering out into mid-air adrift, the gas hissing, the gas-bag whirling like a tee-totum, but falling gently and slantingly, instead of headlong, by reason of the loss of weight caused by the fall of the rope. He came down with a splash into the sea, half a mile away.

Meantime, uproar had seized upon the fortress. Lights flashed, challenges were roared from sentry to sentry along the ramparts, while round the cape, from the direction of the causeway, came the sound of rowlocks. The gunboat was sending a contingent of investigation!

Gilforth lifted up his voice, and thundered vehement denunciations at his skipper, his crew and Palke, holding on desperately meanwhile to his plank, and sputtering about as he tried to free himself from the entanglement of the network.

Fortunately, he was heard. The *May Fly* cut from her anchors, and came groping through the fog to find him, followed, of course, by the man-of-war's boat. The two met almost above the swimmer's head!

There was a shock, an exchange of heated compliments, and, on the part of the Austrians, an ineffectual attempt to draw cutlasses. Then Gilforth was dragged aboard his ship by the hair of his head, and the submarine dived into the calm like an otter. What the Austrian marines thought and said is known only to themselves, and probably would not bear reporting.

I am sorry to say that von Ausslich took his beating rather sadly. He received a telegram, dated from Venice, the day following the escape. It asked him to dine any evening during the next six at Danielli's "to meet Herr Maurus Svirnai, late of Sfaxola."

He sent a violently discourteous refusal, but, being a gentleman and a sportsman, enclosed a draft for one thousand pounds. This amount Gilforth announced he should bestow on some deserving charity.

"I think," said Palke, as he medi-

tated on the sum—ten times as large—which the adventure had cost Gilforth, and on the desperate hazards which that very reckless person had undergone, "I think you had better send it to a home for destitute idiots. Regard it as an investment," added Palke, caustically.



THE HAPPY ISLES

SOMEWHERE, they lie beyond the purple rim
 Of that unfathomed vastitude, the sea,
 Or so we dream; the sky, a canopy
 Of never-failing azure; and a hymn
 Of golden music ever, from the limb
 Of the slim palm, uprising languorously;
 And fountains flashing, and a harmony
 Of variant verdure, never growing dim.

How shall we gain them? Yonder rocks the boat
 Upon the impulsive bosom of the tide;
 Come, sweet, your hand! The sun upon us smiles;
 Out of the distance sounds a luring note.
 If we have Love for guardian and for guide,
 I know that we shall reach the Happy Isles.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



PLAYING SAFE

"LOOK here, sir! You have been calling on my daughter every night for the past six months!"

"But I can't afford to get married, sir, and if I call on any other girl, I'm afraid I might fall in love with her."



"EVE," said Adam, "my trousers are looking very shabby. I wish I knew where I could get them pressed."

"Put them in the large family Bible," said Eve, who was immensely practical. "It's the best way in the world to press leaves."

DEAR DEAD WOMEN

By Richard Le Gallienne

NOT the sacred women who lie in their shrouds, pillowed upon their golden hair, but the living women who once loved us and love us no more—those are the really dead women. The women whose eyes are closed seem near and human in comparison with those horrible women, who, though really dead, contrive to go on existing—or making a ghastly semblance of existence—without us. It makes one's flesh creep to think of them, and to meet them again is really to have seen a ghost.

I shall never forget the start it gave me, when, after seeing or hearing nothing of her for four years, I suddenly came upon Meriel—drinking champagne in a merry company. She had even the heartlessness to lift her glass to me, and smile! Horrible resurrection! Do the dead rise like that? I looked at her with something like fear, almost expecting her to fade away, a phantom of my disordered brain; but no! she persisted—persisted drinking champagne. Yes, surely it was Meriel. How strange it was! Still Meriel, and still—drinking champagne.

And it was all gone then—all nothing to her—all that divine past of ours—ah! speak of it softly—all gone, all nothing to her! O Meriel, you *cannot* have forgotten. It was all so dear, so good, so true, so wonderful! O love, the stars and the dews of it, and the heavenly voices, and all the kindness, all the laughter. Oh, you *cannot* have forgotten. Or are you wicked now, and has time indeed turned the old dreams to derision?

Meriel, I cannot stay. I will not watch you there—drinking champagne; or will you come back, and drink it with me, drink it with me and no one else forever!

So whirled my mad thoughts till I could support them no more, and I fled from those lit and laughing diners; but, as I went, Meriel raised her glass again, and smiled.

Perhaps there is no gulf quite so impassable as that which divides us from the woman who loved us once, but who loves us no more; nor is there any woman so sternly inaccessible—to us—as she whom we once won—and then lost. Life has no stranger thing in it than this: that two people should be all the world to each other; that they should share all the sacredness, all the tenderness of existence together, be closely united by a thousand ties of loving intercourse, and that suddenly all this enchanted intimacy should pass away, as though indeed it were a mere trick of enchantment, to be replaced by an alienation so profound that no two people, however unacquainted, are now so far from each other as these two who were once so near.

It is surely the very strangest thing that any one else in the world may approach Meriel but—I. I of all people! The very smallest amenity is denied me. Others may flirt with her, make her little presents, write her pretty letters, take her to see the play, be permitted to kiss her hand, and generally behave in a way that—if it were I, how well I can imagine the haughty "Sir!" that would transfix me with interjections, were I to attempt the

most innocent of these liberties. Such divinity doth hedge a woman!

In the company of such reflections it is hard not to be cynical about human relationships, and if we escape cynicism, we must at least sorrowfully ask ourselves, What, then, is durable in human life, if this could pass away? On what shall a man build, if love like this can so pitifully, almost ludicrously, come to naught? Almost ludicrously—for such a bankruptcy throws a shadow of ridicule upon all human credit. What do human feelings and human vows amount to, if one day they can seem so stable, and so infinitely important, and the next day be so much east wind!

Yes! it is no mere egoism that prompts the pang with which we think of some one we have loved as happy and shining somewhere out there in the human infinitude—in spite of all that has been and can never be again. There is something in the feeling, too, of a fine impersonal jealousy for the memory of a beautiful thing. We resent this oblivion no little, as we resent the forgetfulness of some fair deed, or the neglect of some noble name. Our love is dead indeed—but let us not forget how lovely a thing it was in its life; let us think of it with that reverence due to all beautiful history; let us even sometimes scatter secret violets upon its grave, the violets of the Past and Gone.

I think we have too little reverence for our own histories, too little, indeed, of that attitude of mind, which made young Sir Thomas Browne declare his life “a miracle of thirty years.” Busy, maybe, with the emotional present, we press on toward the new raptures, the new faces—forgetful of all that old treasure of the heart. It were well, I think, to give ourselves a little time to meditate on that. And for this it is good, on occasion, to be all alone—alone, say, in a great foreign city, lonely with a million lighted windows.

Such a loneliness is mine to-night, and as from a watch-tower I mark the lamps of pleasure breaking into blossoms of gold in the twilight, and hear

afar off the growing hum of dinner and theatre, and the fragrant rustle of a hundred thousand night-flowering women, I say to myself, I wonder for whom Miranda is dressing to-night—for whom is she coiling her splendid hair, crimson as a field of poppies, and just as full of sleep. I can see her so plainly. She is like a vivid poster on the walls of my heart. For whom is that radiance of expectancy in her blue eyes, that faint flush of excitement on her cheek, as she raises her white arms to her head, and thrusts in here and there the amber pins? Ah! that throat, those shoulders, Miranda, in the glass! They were mine once. Whose are they to-night? How blond they are, how abundant—like a field of wheat, with the sun on it, I once said; yes! wrote something like it in a poem—a poem Miranda has forgotten, at least to-night. I have forgotten it, too, but Miranda I have not forgotten. I hate the man she is dining with to-night, whoever he may be. I can see him calling for her, shingly groomed, and smiling fatuously with self-congratulation. He is so happy to be taking Miranda out to dinner. He is thinking that at last the long, dry stalk of the day is about to blossom. He is thinking that in a few moments Miranda will be seated by him in a hansom, a thrilling garden of fragrance and gauzy convolutions of silk and lace—

Awake, O north wind; and come thou south: blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out!

She will take his hand and give him a long, sweet look, and they will each heave a glad little sigh because they are together at last, and the man will say, “I am so happy,” and she will answer, “So am I.” And then they will be driven off to paradise.

Far from them indeed is the thought of the poor, lonely ghost that is I. And yet, Miranda, we used to think our little dinners wonderful occasions, too, if you remember; and you used to say that I . . . well, never mind—you have evidently forgotten it all, forgotten all the fun and the fairy-tale of it, and all the happy childishness.

I must remember for both; so to-night, across three thousand miles of foam, I am thinking of you, Miranda. "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my fashion!"

Miranda has gone out to dinner, and I am once more alone, looking out over the terrible city, lying beneath me like some monster with a million golden eyes. Oh, the abysses of infinite solitude, the heights, the depths, that surround on every side the tiny spark of one's being—and, perhaps deepest and darkest of all, the innermost abyss of the soul. I shiver, and turn from the window, but that abyss within my lonely room is lonelier still; and I am back at the window again—for there at least are lights and the human murmur.

And presently another face has come to join me in my solitude, as though a great white moth had floated up to me out of the night—a face of amethyst and silver, a shining, stricken face of tears and dreams, a face my heart dare hardly look upon, because the face is still so dear. This face and I have shared so many sorrows together, have loved our love so well, yet has it slipped from our hands like a pearl that has fallen into the sea, and there is only the bitter sea left to us, and the lonely wind.

Oh, did you think I was glad, Isabel, that our pearl had fallen into the sea—did you think that? Ah! come and look in my heart to-night.

Do you remember, Isabel, that evening we walked along the shining levels of sand by the Irish sea—and there was still light enough for me to write a verse for you on the hard sand? We walked till the moon rose, and when we came back to read our verse by its light, lo! the rising tide was already washing it away. Do you remember that night?

Do you remember that other night when we walked through the sweet-smelling Devon lanes, again by the sea? Your face seemed made of starlight and your body of silver mist, as you floated, rather than walked, by my side; and I was half-afraid of you—

you looked so like a spirit, or a woman of faërie. Do you remember that night?

Do you remember that morning, when life had grown sadder, when we walked, again by the sea, in a mighty sunrise, and climbed great shoulders of dune, and stood high up and looked across the glittering plains of water? We were sad, but as yet we had not lost our pearl. Do you remember that morning?

And now I can see the face of Isabel no more—for my tears.

To every man born of woman must have come such hours of lonely retrospect, when the evening sky has seemed like a frieze of unforgotten faces, and his aching heart has gone wandering among lost paradises. With what immortal treasure have the beauty and the goodness of women enriched our memories! They have indeed made of our lives "a miracle of thirty years"—perhaps a miracle of sixty! And, as out of the sweet-smelling treasure-chest we softly take the gifts of wonder they gave us, it will be strange if a sense of our own failure does not overcome us, of failure to appreciate our fairy fortune till it was too late. We were so young, maybe, and so eager for all the beautiful faces that we took all too heedlessly the beautiful face that was our own, and did not value at its worth the gift that is seen to have been so infinitely precious—now that it has been taken back.

One asked of Remorse,
And I made reply:
To have held the bird,
And let it fly;
To have seen the star
For a moment nigh,
And lost it
Through a slothful eye.

Ah, how much better we could love those faces now, how much finer a return we could make for all that faith-of-heart we paid perhaps so cheaply in base coin, the mintage of vanity! If only we could be granted another trial! Life has been teaching us the values of things!

If only we might apply our new wisdom to those old opportunities of happiness so eagerly offered to us! If only we could do all our loving over again! And if we could, would there not be more love and—fewer loves? In how different a spirit, with what gratitude and humility, would we accept the wonderful gift of woman! Oh, how true we would be, how carefully we would tend our love—lest it should die; how we would honor it and humor it, and engage it by a thousand devices—lest it should fly away! And with what attentive happiness would we taste and dwell upon each miraculous moment.

Ah, yes! we see it all so clearly now, as those beautiful faces, so heavenly kind, shine down upon us, "enskied and sainted," from the lonely night. How good, how good they were to us—those beautiful women who loved us once, and love us no more! Surely when one comes to die, a man's last thought will be one of thanksgiving for the goodness of women to him all his days.

Yes! the goodness of women! We talk much of their beauty, but as one grows older, and begins to recover from one's first heady draught of the intoxicant known as woman, it is, I think, woman's goodness, rather than her beauty, that comes to seem her one astonishing characteristic. Her beauty, indeed, comes to take its place as merely one of the component elements of her goodness; and we grow to understand why, in the evolution of humanity, the Madonna has supplanted Aphrodite in the temples of the world. Yes! the homeliest Madonna ever painted comes to wear a beauty for our eyes such as the most provocative Aphrodite, in all the superb pomp of her physical perfection, can wear for us no more.

Woman shares her beauty with the whole of nature. She is but one small fraction of the beauty of the world, and, in a universe which from planet to animalcule is one long riot of beauty, to any eyes but those of a lover's illusion she is, by comparison, but in-

differently fair. The true lovers of beauty, as distinct from mere lovers of women, know many a lovelier thing than woman.

There are creatures in the sea made out of rainbows of such fairy shape that by their side the most beautiful woman is ungainly as a hippopotamus, and the earth and air are clothed and winged with forms more exquisite than any girl that was ever made out of dew and danger. The beauty of some animals far surpasses the beauty of any woman, and the grace of the most graceful woman is clumsiness compared with the maddening mobility of some fishes. What eyes, however lustrous, can hold their own with certain precious stones, or what skin, however fine its texture, dare match itself against the ivory and bloom of certain flowers? Even a woman's hair is coarse compared with the swaying filaments of certain delicate sea-weeds and the stems of silken grasses.

And when we turn from nature to art, woman's hopeless inferiority in beauty to the beautiful work of the artist's dreaming hands is so obvious as to need no illustration. No woman was ever so beautiful as the Parthenon; no woman was ever so beautiful as a Corot; no woman was ever so beautiful as some words.

Woman's beauty, I repeat, but represents her small share in the common stock of universal loveliness. The world is an inexhaustibly beautiful world. After life itself there is nothing so common as beauty. Beauty is the lavish by-product of the vital process. Without apparently giving beauty a thought, nature is heedlessly, wantonly beautiful; and she produces beautiful women as carelessly as she produces some exquisite weed, or litters the bottom of the sea with mother-of-pearl.

But woman's goodness—it is by virtue of that that she is unique in the creation. It is her goodness, not her beauty, that throws over her that hallowing light of the divine, and makes her something more than mortal in very deed; so that her deification by

the Christian Church is less a symbolic transfiguration than a recognition of her actual every-day nature here and now upon the earth. The three attributes most god-like of all the attributes of gods are—Pity, Forgiveness, Consolation; and these are the attributes which make woman—woman.

From first to last how much every man owes to woman for pity, forgiveness and consolation; though it is not till he has lived a while, and suffered and made suffer, that his indebtedness becomes by slow degrees revealed to him. Ah! as he looks back—how much has he been forgiven, from those early heedless days when he took the love of his mother as carelessly as his breath, and wounded her heart without dream-

ing of it, heaven knows how often—on and on, love after love idly accepted, maybe, as so much tribute, and tossed aside with scarce a thought of all that wasted treasure, and all the pain! Mother, Wife, Nurse and Saviour: from first to last, it was Woman that made us, and not we ourselves; and always to the end of our lives, as a child runs to its mother in its distress, so man goes to woman for his solace, and so the whole world of mankind brings its weariness and its tears to the feet of Our Lady of Consolation.

Yes, one can bear to think of the beauty of women, but the thought of the goodness of some women breaks one's heart.



THE MODERN CHILD

MRS. WHITTAKER—Although my little girl is going to school, studying French, taking music lessons and learning how to dance, she doesn't seem to appreciate it.

MRS. GADBY—Why, what has she been doing?

"You may not believe it, but I caught her trying to play the other day."



A CLEAR CASE

"DID Mrs. Winger have any trouble in getting a divorce from her husband?"
 "None whatever. She was able to prove that he had begun to live on a diet."



THE soil that will permit of no vices, is too poor to grow healthy virtues.

QUITS

LOVE me, love my dog! is well
 Adapted for a girl's quotation;
 But *Love me, love my doggerel*,
 Goes better with my occupation.

So, when Myrtila bids me share
 My love with her young, pampered puplet,
 (Only the brave deserve the fair!)
 I offer each of them a couplet.

Both dog and doggerel would be
 Much better off if one could chain 'em.
 But then, what matters it? Says she:
Cave canentem, cave canem!

FELIX CARMEN.



NE PLUS ULTRA

DASHAWAY—I never saw such a hopelessly ignorant chap as Bramble, did you?

CLEVERTON—No. That fellow is almost ignorant enough to be in charge of an information bureau.



HIS LOSS HER GAIN

“SO Mrs. Gadder's husband has left her.”

“How do you know?”

“I see by the paper that she is living quietly at home.”



ONE swallow may not make a Summer, but one bite caused the Fall.

AT THE LADIES' WHIST

By Morris Wade

“**W**HOSE deal is it?”
“Mine, isn't it?”
“Why, no, you dealt—
Oh, it's Mamie's deal!”

“So it *is*!”
“Oh, you never shuffled the cards, Mame!”

“Oh, I forget!”

“Well, let it go this time.”

“If you were playing with some persons, they would call it the same as a misdeal if you didn't shuffle the cards.”

“Oh, well, we won't be so fussy as all that, because— Let me see, did you cut the cards, Lou?”

“I forget whether I did or not. Did I cut the cards, or didn't I?”

“Oh, I don't believe that you did.”

“Oh, well, let them run this time.”

“If you were playing with my husband, I guess you would cut the cards before they were dealt! He'd *die* before he would play if the cards hadn't been cut.”

“I'm thankful I'm not that particular. I don't see any use in sticking so closely to Hoyle, for— Oh, I have the loveliest hand!”

“Mine is just horrid! Here I have——”

“It isn't fair to talk across the board!”

“So it isn't.”

“Is it my play?”

“Of course it is.”

“I'm so taken with Mame's stunning new hat that I can't keep my mind on the game, and I— What's trumps?”

“Diamonds.”

“Here I have been thinking that hearts were trumps, and I have thrown away three or four good diamonds. What a dunce I am!”

“We were playing with the Jolly Good Fun Club the other night, and I had the funniest hand I ever had in my life. I had— Whose ace is that on the board?”

“It's your partner's.”

“And here I was just going to trump it! Did you say diamonds were trumps?”

“Yes, they are.”

“Now it is your play, Mame. Have you seen Lutie Babcock's new wrap? It is the *stunningest* thing! There must be forty yards of real lace on it, and she has the most fetching lace-and-chiffon boa to wear with it, and— Oh, you *mean* thing to go and play that trump just when I thought the trick was mine!”

“Oh, you renigged!”

“I never!”

“Yes, you *did*! You should have played that queen of hearts when you played that ten of clubs! That's cheating!”

“I guess it isn't cheating when I forgot that I had suit!”

“I wonder what the first prize will be.”

“Do you know, I have won two first prizes and two second prizes already this Winter! Just think!”

“I never win anything. It makes me so mad!”

“I always get the booby prize, if I get one at all, and— I can see your hand, Lou.”

“Well, you are real mean to look at it. I am so awkward with cards that I am always showing my hand. Oh, you dreadfully horrid wretch, to go and take three tricks in succession!”

“Whose trump is that on the board? You just ought to see my hand! If I

don't get a decent hand soon, I'll give up. One time——"

"What under the sun and moon and stars did you go and lead that for?"

"Because I wanted to! I guess I know what I am about! You follow suit now or— Do look at that pale-yellow waist Katie Page has on! Isn't it odd?"

"It goes well with her all-black hat, but it might fit her a good deal better. See how it wrinkles under the left arm. It sets my teeth on edge to see a waist wrinkle that way, for— Is it my play?"

"Of course it is."

"What's trumps?"

"Hearts."

"Horrors!"

"Oh, I have just the *dearest* hand!"

"Somebody must have a lovely hand, for mine couldn't be worse. You stop looking over my shoulder, Sally!"

"Hee, hee, hee!"

"It's just downright hateful of you to laugh over my miserable hand!"

"I hope the first prize will be something worth while, for I stand a splendid chance of getting it."

"I hope it will be something trifling, for I know very well that I *won't* get it."

"A friend of mine won the loveliest chafing-dish at an afternoon whist last week. It never cost a penny less than twenty dollars. The other ladies were just wild with envy. I have hated her ever since."

"My husband's mother thinks that it is just dreadful because I play whist for prizes. She says that it is just the same as gambling."

"The horrid thing!"

"Oh, there's been a misdeal. I have too many cards."

"And here I have the very best hand I have had this afternoon! How mean!"

"Just look at the trumps I had!"

"Heavens! I'm glad there was a misdeal."

"You know, I was playing with some ladies last week, and one of them cheated shamefully, and some of the ladies got so mad. I thought the fur would fly when some one accused her of it."

"Why can't people play fair? I wonder if it is true that Mrs. DeVord is going to leave her husband. They say that— What's trumps?"

"Oh, now they are going to stop for refreshments! I'm glad of it, for I'm starving. Whist always makes me so hungry."

"Me, too. I think it is because one has to concentrate all one's mind on the game in such a really exhausting way."

"I guess that is it. I know that I feel all worn out after an afternoon of whist. How good the coffee smells!"

"Next to whist, I love coffee."

"I *love* whist. And then it is such a scientific game."

"I think it is real instructive."

"You have to put your mind right on it, anyhow."

"Lovely coffee, isn't it?"

"Delicious! I'm going to be horrid enough to ask for a second cup."

"So am I. I do think our whist parties are beautiful."

"So do I."



POSTPONED

HE—We can't elope to-night, dear.

SHE—Why not?

"I forgot to send the notices to the papers."

THE INVISIBLE PRINCE

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

"IF I could not talk with you every day, I should forget the art of conversation," she said, softly.

She was leaning against a great beech-tree, and there was no audience within range of eyesight. The light slid shyly through leaves, and left flecks of gold-dust on her hair, as she shook a pan of berries, which she held in her lap, and ran her fingers through them. "To-day it is gooseberries, to-morrow it will be peaches—then pears, then grapes and then—pigs! Ugh! One surely has a life besides that of the body! I know quite well what you are like, my prince—" She broke off, ruminating without lifting her eyes from the berries. Her voice was wandering and low, as if in the habit of expressing its thought to itself. "You are very fair—princes always are—and you are much more real than the life up there"—this with a nod toward the square, white house on the hill. "I must have my hour of conversation every day with you, or I should grow out of proportion. It is frightful to grow out of proportion. Miss Wicks is disproportioned on the subject of clothes, Mrs. Pullet on petty gossiping, and Cousin Amanda dreadfully overgrown in the direction of cookery, while the professor—" she stopped, and stemmed gooseberries industriously for a while, then added—"is different. . . . Ever since I came here three years ago, I have been growing in the direction of the kitchen—of washing dishes and making desserts. I wonder what the boarders would think, did I put on my pink gown some evening, and appear among them as a hostess—

entertaining as was necessary on Fridays at Madame Waring's? Oh, pardon me!" She laughed softly. "I forgot that you had part in this discourse! It must be horribly uninteresting to your highness—all this petty, commonplace detail! But, alas! I am growing frightfully banal and commonplace.

"I compliment you on your disguise, my prince; that of a tree is the noblest part of nature! I do so respect a tree! I beg you not to shake your branches, however. I am aware that outright compliments are exceedingly *gauche*. Oh, yes, I know French and Italian; only, there is no one here to speak with, always excepting yourself, my dear prince. You see that my disguise is less poetic. At my father's death, it was discovered that I was a poor princess, and one would far rather be a poor peasant. There are so many poor princesses! . . . My money was entrusted to a man who loved it too well, and he never returned. I am not complaining, your highness; complaints are the oiling of one's machinery in public, so madame would have said. She was a wonderful old lady, and I am sure your reticence would have pleased her.

"Did I not hear that the King of the Loving Isles has asked for your sister's hand in marriage? How interesting such an alliance must be to you!

"Thank you! . . . It will give me unbounded pleasure to be present at the celebration of the nuptials. In return, permit me to show you my favorite retreat, my own boudoir. See!" She laughed softly, and put the pan beside her on the ground, and lay

back, threading the grass with her fingers, her eyes lazily dreamful. "Notice the color scheme in greens, done by the greatest of artists, and for me! Behold the frieze of tiny brown twigs and little leaves! Charming, is it not? You are favored, your highness. Few are admitted here. Isn't it odd that you are a man and not a woman?" she said, suddenly. "I forgot, though, you occurred in thought, just as you are, and a guest must not be disclaimed."

Her soft voice trailed into silence, and she took the berries up, and worked at them for a while, pondering. The afternoon was dreamful, and the woods beyond her dark with mystery. Now and then, a bird sent its lonely note through them, piercing the dream. Then her words took up the current of her thought, murmuringly, like a gentle wind upon still water.

"My prince, I must make a confession which will shock you. Last night I very nearly ran away. Oh, yes! It was what Billy Pullet calls a close shave. All at once, I could not endure it any longer—the life here. Every one was asleep, excepting the professor. He reads late. I came down here, and the world was very dark. There were only the stars and myself, and they seemed like brothers. I grew afraid to make a sound, but was far more afraid to go back. Oh, far more! The thought of day made me shudder! But where could I go? For I must make the still more humiliating confession that I had no money to run away on. In spite of what novels tell one, one cannot run far afoot, without being overtaken and brought back, and that would be quite too trite. I know I should stamp, for I've considerable temper—only Cousin Amanda doesn't suspect it. When I refuse to answer, and 'make talk' about people, she calls it 'the sulks.'—The jasmine odor was exquisitely sweet, and the crickets were calling . . . I crept back to bed in the attic. There was nothing else to do . . . I hadn't cried before in a great while.

"This morning, Mrs. Pullet said that she heard some one walking.

Every one pronounced it a different sort of sound. I said nothing.

"My prince"—she leaned luxuriously back, and stretched her small and rather rusty shoes outward; she was smiling unconsciously as youth still smiles when it is strong—"the wisest of all advice is to answer a fool according to his folly; otherwise, you will surely be misunderstood. We are apt to forget that our pearls of thought are only for him who dives after them—we scatter them like sand!"

She sighed, and her head drooped; her dark lashes swept her cheeks as she drew a "pussy-tail" stem through her fingers. Then, suddenly, her breast heaved, and she flung herself down upon her curved arm.

"Oh, the pearls! the pearls! How can I endure it? . . . Yet, what shall I do? My dear prince, can I go to an advertising agency in these clothes?" One small foot was thrust vexedly out from its blue gingham skirt. "Three years have reduced my serge to rags. But, of course, you know nothing about rags. Pardon my stupidity! You comprehend that my cloth-of-gold audience gown would be rather *mal à propos*? While my ermine might grow soiled—"

Her voice broke, and she threw her arms upward with a laugh, bitter and tragic, holding the dry echo of a sob.

"Oh, my ermine, of which I was so proud! It is soiled, indeed, and there is none to know that I could wear it royally!"

"Celeste! Celeste!" called a voice.

She sprang up, and brushed the twigs from her skirt, and recovered her low, laughing voice. "My dear prince, the audience is over! Yes, you may kiss my hand. *Au revoir*, until tomorrow!"

With the pan under her arm, she went lightly up the hill-path, smiling to herself.

Then the branches of the beech-tree shook violently, as with dryad laughter. Its leaves parted, and a figure slid out of them down to the ground. He shook the hair out of his eyes, and stared up the hill. He put a pair of

eye-glasses on, and looked down at the soft impression on the grass at the foot of the tree.

"Well, by Jove!" he muttered; "by Jove!"

That evening, the talk at the boarding-house table lagged. The professor had been known to break into speech occasionally, but usually his capacity for silence amounted to genius, and on this occasion he saw and heard nothing around him, and dropped his glasses when the peaches were handed by Celeste, the cousin of the hostess. The professor sprang up, exclaiming, "Oh, don't, please!" when Celeste had reached after the eye-glasses, and she replied, "I have them"—in a voice which was an excellent thing in woman.

There was silence around the table when he added, "Are you not coming now to supper? Allow me to make room for you." Celeste sometimes took her place at her cousin's right, after the meal was well under way.

"Not yet," she said, quietly, and returned to her occupation of serving peaches and cream.

There was then the stillness which precedes effortful speech. That the professor, of all people, should notice one as unimportant as Celeste was of itself a problem. But the problems of the circle of people who are collected without their own choice or volition are apt to lack originality, and to end in an inelegant cud of speculation for them to chew upon. The professor had inspired respect; first, because he had a large double room, and paid a large double price. Again, he was not really a professor, but was called so behind his back as a title of respect involving his eye-glass, his propensity for long and solitary rambles, his unique interest in small and unnecessary things, and his pockets, which were usually stuffed with books or letters.

On this evening, the professor did not resort to his book and lamp, but joined Miss Wicks in a stroll up a neighboring hill, leaving an interested audience on the porch. There was also an

audience of one in an attic window overhead. She had red-bright hair, sweet lips sadly curved, a white throat and a young form such as life loves to be good to. She watched the two go up the hill, and marked that Miss Wicks, as usual, did all the talking.

One star stole out over the beech-tree, and dusk drew closer, its brooding wings closing balmfully over that which day had bruised. Then she sat alone in the darkness, until a whippoorwill's note pierced outward, shivering the silence with its passion.

The next day, at the hour when idlers take their naps, she stole down to the copse. There was a hole in the beech-tree, and a squirrel frisked out of it and upward, as she sank with a sigh of relaxation at the foot of the tree.

"That is right, Provincio, you make an excellent steward! Say to his highness that I will receive him—I must have my lesson in speaking English for a while. Ah, Provincio, you are an extravagant servant! You should help manage a boarding-house; it would teach you economy. Oh, I hate the word to-day; I really must strive to forget it . . . I shall be a spendthrift; I shall travel." She closed her eyes, and her voice was plaintive in its weariness. "You are there, my prince? *A la bonne heure!* I am considering a change of scene." Her blue eyes opened suddenly. "What would father say? I believe I'm growing cowardly! Some one says to endure and to pardon is the wisdom of life; therefore, I must endure. . . . But let us make-believe, my prince, else I may lose my individuality. Do you know what that means—to lose your individuality? It is frightful! But I should not bore you with personalities, your highness. It has been so long since I really received, that I am forgetting the usages of polite society.

"We must hurry, if we are to travel. I have not long, owing to a complication in the ice-cream freezer, called peach *mousse*. It is excellent, and I shall see that the professor gets a goodly share—because he is so very nice. I will tell you about him on our way to

Greece. We must not go to Egypt; father and I went there after our season in London. It would make me sad. But let us stop in Italy. I would see Amalfi once more, and the reflection of the water under the old convent of the Cappucini. Lovely Amalfi!

"There, at Amalfi, I shall tell you about the professor. He does not know if I be maid, cousin or scullion, yet he uses toward me the tone of deference which a gentleman uses to a lady. It is very nice to hear. Besides, he does not know that I know who he is—no one else here does. He is the Penfield Gallend who wrote 'In Nets of Silver' and 'When Dryads Laughed,' and the dear little books of travel which father and I read here in this very spot. As soon as I heard his name I knew there could not be two of him—besides, he looks it."

She closed her eyes for a moment, but it was not the silence of sleep. Presently, her voice went on:

"It cannot last always, this life. . . . I must see this Summer out, for Cousin Amanda's sake. Poor Cousin Amanda! She thinks that the genus feminine is catalogued all alike. It needs only a roof, food, a gingham skirt and some one ultimately to marry. There is little danger of the last, my prince, unless I marry you!" She laughed a note of pleasurable girlish nonsense. "In my growing materialism I have thought nothing of marrying. *Bien!* For I could marry only a man such as my father would have been proud of; therefore, I have the right to bestow my hand on you, your highness!" She held her fingers lazily before her eyes, and the leaves of the beech seemed to contract as though to conceal something. "Madame's manicurist would not recognize them now; they are reduced to base usages. No, not base; father would not like that! But I do really hate to wash dishes. I fear that I am letting myself run down." She untwisted a long coil of bright hair, and allowed it to slip through her fingers. "It is not so bad—this is the way heroines do in books; then they go and look at themselves in a brook. I will let you

be my mirror. Now, should you love me adoringly—I should be content with nothing short of an overflowing devotion. Why? Because there has been no one for so long whom I could—no one for so long—I am afraid—oh, I am afraid!" She sprang up, twisting her hair quickly; and, with a change of mood, thrust her hand into the squirrel's hole, and exclaimed as she drew it out, holding a brown note-book with a pencil thrust through it. She flushed rosily, and looked down at it with recognition; then slipped it back into the hole, and turned away.

Two sunshades, a red and a white, came down the hill-path toward the woods. They sheltered Mrs. Pullet and Miss Wicks.

"Oh, there is Celeste!" said the former lady. "Celeste, have you seen my children?"

"No, madame," said the girl.

"Then just look them up, will you, and say that I am down in the woods?"

"I should like to oblige you, madame, but I am on my way to the house, and am needed there now," replied the girl, gently, as she went up the hill.

Mrs. Pullet tossed her head. "A most uppish person! I am tempted to report her to Miss Timanus."

"Oh, I don't know," said Miss Wicks; "she seems quiet enough. Pa says she is beautiful; fancy!"

Mrs. Pullet laughed, harshly. "Really, I never notice the appearance of people of her class. I think her a presuming creature!"

They disappeared into the woods, and then the branches divided, and the beech-tree yielded up its own again. Some one slid downward, and dived into the hole after the note-book. He handled it almost reverently, and slipped it into his pocket.

"It was a near thing," he muttered, "but I had to drop it there! I feel like a thief. Beautiful?—I should say so!"

It was on the afternoon of a day soon after, one of those early September delights when the sun grows faint from feeding the lavish color beneath

it. The sumac was scarlet, the light in long, slanting lines, and the woods were dark and silent. Nature resigned herself to rest after the passion of Summer.

The princess of the beech-tree slipped down to where it was shadowy as a dream. Her face was pale and her eyes were bright, and she leaned against the tree with sharp-drawn breath, which told that she was hurt with the wound that does not heal itself in tears. Then she sat down with her face on her hand, and thought deeply. There came a sound of whistling, and she took up the little roll of mending which she had dropped upon the ground.

The professor came through the light and shadow of the copse. He whistled, and switched at the weeds along the path, then started in apparent surprise when he saw her, and came forward quickly when she moved as though to leave.

"Please do not go, Miss Celeste! I was just wishing for some one to show this to—we so seldom find one." He held out a humming-bird's nest, and sat beside her in the most natural way possible. "See how finely it is made! Jove! This is a nice place!" he added, innocently, looking around him. "One could come here every day and not tire of it. Do you come often?"

"Almost every day, when I have the time. I must go now, however," she said.

"Oh, do not go! Why, see here, I'll go if it will do as well. But I hope you don't wish it. You see, I haven't had any one to have a talk with since I came. I've wanted to ask you several times, but feared that you—that you might not be pleased, you know."

"Gentlemen do not, as a rule, have talks with girls in my position," she said.

"A lady is a lady in any position," he rejoined; "you, with your experience, know that."

She looked at him, wonderingly.

"My position? How do you know?"

"How does one's instinct know anything about another? Forget about

your position here—unless I can help you—if I can." He paused.

But she took up his words seriously, comprehending his sincerity.

"Help me? You are the only one who has thought I would need help. Oh, I do! But can a man understand? Your books understand one——"

He could not feign with her further than was necessary.

"Let us begin by being friends, then—you may order me about all you please."

She laughed with pleasure.

"I had forgotten how to order any one about, save Billy Pullet."

"Billy adores you! Let us play, then, that you are a princess made to command!"

She started. "Do other people make-believe? I do, sometimes."

"We all do, unconsciously. We make-believe we are happy, contented, when we are——" He broke off, irrelevantly. "Oh, we ought to be happy! We ought to be because——"

"Because the world is made for it," she interpolated, reading his thought, "for happiness, beauty and——"

"And love," he said.

"Not for sin and hardness," she went on. "Oh, I do not want to grow hard! I do not! That was the trouble a while ago when—when you came. I do not want to feel so toward people. I want to make allowance, to tolerate—as father would have me do—and to be kind as a lady should; as my——" she turned her face away, and her breath came painfully—"as my sweet mother would have done."

He did not speak for a second. He, too, was looking away. Then, with great gentleness, he said:

"You will never grow hard, or like them, child! Do not imagine that people are all like these."

"I do not wish to lose the little hall-marks of inheritance," she went on, with an impassioned thrill in her voice. "Some one has said that well-bred people never insist upon facts. I do grow tired of being forced to confess whether the corn came out of the garden or from Heppler's wagon."

They laughed together at this, the tolerant laughter of unconfessed comradeship; then she arose, as a red dot and a white one came out of the woods in the distance.

"First, let us investigate the squirrel's hole," said he.

She thrust her hand in it, smiling, but drew it out slowly, holding a white-and-silver box tied with pink.

"Oh! you put it there! Bonbons! I haven't seen a box for three years!"

Her face glowed with the irrepressible excitement of youth, and she laughed as with a child's pleasure.

"I did," he said, gravely. "I am fond of bonbons. Please open it!"

While she untied the string, he wove a grape-leaf basket, and then emptied half the contents of the box into it, and gravely returned the box to the hole. "The squirrels may guard that until to-morrow. Please take the rest with you."

"They are beautiful," she said, seriously, and went up the hill-path, wondering if there could have been a time when bonbons were a commonplace happening.

When she awakened the next morning, it was with the consciousness of something new and vital in life, under the spell of which she was assuming her correct proportions in thought. But she did not go down to the beech-tree during the afternoon, until the professor had started out with his fishing-rod over his shoulder.

Then she took her work to the little copse, and flushed with excitement as she thrust her hand into the squirrel's hole to find the box. She only wanted to feel the luxury of its satiny surface, and to untie and tie it again. But there was a slip of paper lying in it.

She sat under the tree and examined it—a paragraph written in a small, literary hand.

Once upon a time there was a princess who was forced by untoward magic to spend her days digging artichokes—and she did not like artichokes. No one thought it strange, because those who passed her way were so accustomed to seeing her dig artichokes that they did not dream she was a princess. But

one day a brown beetle chirped from under a stone:

"I know you! I know you! You are the Princess Blanche de Mains!"

"They are not white now," said the princess, spreading her brown fingers ruefully; "but, how do you know?"

"By your cloth-of-gold cloak, of course!" said the beetle.

"It is invisible, save to one of royal blood," said the Princess Blanche de Mains.

"Tut, tut, child, I saw it at once. It is radiant," returned the impertinent beetle.

"Why, then—why, then—" stammered the little princess.

"I must have royal blood, of course," said the imperturbable beetle.

"But how shall I know—?" began the Princess Blanche de Mains.

"That I tell the truth?" put in the beetle.

"You must take it on trust. Don't you know that there is nothing so royal as faith? It is the father of love."

"Pardon me, I did not know that beetles talked book-fashion. You speak like a gentleman, therefore it must be true," said the princess.

"Good!" said the beetle. "Now pick me up! pick me up! The currents of earth are strong, but in your hand I shall be above them. Pick me up!"

So the princess took the beetle in her little brown hand which had dug artichokes, and it slid between her fingers.

"Oh, I hope I have not hurt you!" she said.

"Not at all, your highness!" said a voice, and the most debonair of princes bowed before her. How did she recognize him? By the beetle's reason; his cloth-of-gold cloak, of course. He proceeded: "Now, if your highness will permit it, we need not be lonely any longer, because we have recognized each other. May I help you tend your roses?"

"Roses! They are artichokes!" cried the princess.

"Pardon me, I never mistake a rose for an artichoke," said the prince.

She looked over her shoulder.

They were all roses—roses as red as the sunset which lay upon them.

She, under the beech-tree, sat smiling down upon the slip of paper, and her face, which had grown rather pale of late, was softly pink.

"There is nothing so royal as faith. It is the father of—"

"Oh!" she broke off, and thrust the paper into her dress, and took up her work industriously.

A bird-note sounded deep in the thicket, and presently a bare-legged boy with a net over his shoulder leaped the bar fence beyond, and came out to

the woods-path. When he passed the copse, he peered in and grinned.

"Hello, Celeste! Say, I told 'em 'twasn't so."

"Told them—what, Billy?" she asked.

"They said—ma and Miss Wicks—that you came down here to meet the professor. I told 'em that he'd gone fishin' long ago, an' you ain't no softy!"

He trotted up the hill-path, knee-deep in grass, and she sprang up, the hot tears scorching her eyes.

"How dare they! How can they be so cruel?"

She leaned against the tree as to her only protection, her hands clenched at her sides, and her breath fighting back sobs.

He came up the woods-path slowly, but stopped at the copse and looked in. When he saw her, she turned away, but he threw his rod on the ground, and strode forward.

"What is it? tell me!" he demanded, standing before her.

"Oh, please go! Please do not come here! You must not; it is not kind——"

"Not until you tell me—what have they—?" He stopped, but his eyes mastered hers.

She looked up at him fearlessly, and, because he, too, was royal in his own right, she told him. He grew pale under his sunburn, but his eyes were blue.

"My little lady," he said, looking down at her, "I did not intend to tell you to-day. It is all too delicate a thing as yet to be worded—but now you need me, and I shall. We must give them something to talk about. Will you marry me?"

The beech-tree shivered above them, and grew still in expectation.

"Me!" she said; "you want to marry me? Oh, what do you mean?—You cannot— You only want to make it all right for me! Why do you want to marry me?"

He laughed a little for very gladness, she was so good to look at.

"For the oldest of reasons and the simplest, sweetheart—I love you. That is all, I love you——!"

She listened as to a far-off sound. "It is very strange," she said; "it is very strange——"

"It is not strange at all. I do not want you to decide at once, and never unless——" his voice trembled a little—"unless you think you can love me. No; do not speak now! Oh, it is not an easy thing for a woman to give herself up. I am a busy man whose work is in his hand—laid out for him. I must develop it. I must, in a way, live for it—can you understand? It sounds selfish," he added, humbly; "I thought that I wanted only Art—until I saw you."

Her eyes were reading his while he spoke. They grew very gentle as she said: "I understand, I think, but how can it be possible—that in so short a time you—you can love me?"

"Perhaps it has been growing since creation, for I knew at once," he added, lightly, "by your cloth-of-gold cloak!" But he was pale.

She drew her eyes from his, then. "I cannot do it—not while I am here. It would not be fair to you—it would make them wonder. I cannot do it—that is, not now," she added, softly; and the light came back to his eyes.

"Wait, and think about it. Oh, I shall always love you, my little Princess of the Beech-tree! But do not give me less than all. See how selfish I am!" He tried to laugh lightly, and she did not look up at him.

"Celeste! Celeste!" called her cousin. She went up the hill-path, and he threw himself under the beech-tree, with his arm across his eyes; therefore he did not see the look which stole back to him.

There was wonder over her. She did not notice that her cousin's cap was awry and her face flushed and excited, as she drew the girl around the side of the house, out of sight.

"Celeste! There is news for you, great news! That rascal, Dalster, has made good every cent of your money;

the investments have doubled—the interest—girl, you are rich! rich! think of it! Oh, you lucky one! The lawyer is here now——”

Celeste followed her cousin into the house, and listened quietly to the lawyer's statement. A more wonderful thing had happened than the recovery of money, and, after all, possession is measured by comparisons. Then she bound her cousin to silence on the subject, and went about her evening duties as usual. But when they were over, and sunset was breathing on the tree-tops, she went up to the attic room while a star hung overhead—the magic star at the end of fate's wand which had pointed to the beech-tree.

She drew a soft, pink gown from her trunk, a gown rich with old lace, and clasped around her neck a string of pearls which had been her mother's. She twisted her hair high, and smiled into her tiny glass, for it was the vision of a princess in a sunset gown; then she went down-stairs by the front way, and out through the chatting groups of people, as was her right, and, unmindful of their stares, she smiled graciously on the professor, and said:

“May I speak with you?”

He came to her, his eyes full of suppressed delight, and, regardless of the murmurs of amazement following them,

they went down the hill-path together, in the twilight. They reached the beech-tree before he spoke to her; then it was only a whisper:

“My beautiful! my beautiful!”

She smiled up at him, happily.

“I have something to tell you here—but, first, will you please say that which you said to me this afternoon?”

“I love you! I love you!”

“Yes, yes—that is it!” She drew a sharp breath over the keen sweetness of the words. “I wanted to give them back to you before I sleep. I love you, and I'm quite sure that I'll marry you—some time; but, first, I must tell you——”

“Tell me only that,” he pleaded, drawing her hands upward to his lips.

But she told him about the recovered money.

He laughed. “You are my proud princess, first and last,” he said; “presently we will go tell your cousin—I must know you are mine, and let it be known.”

When they turned to the hill-path, she stopped and looked over her shoulder.

“What is it?” he asked, at the beech-tree spreading its branches over them.

“I thought that I saw red roses!” said she; and they smiled at each other as their hands fell apart.



THIEVES

OUT of the gleaming casket of the years,
We stole one golden day;
How could we know that with unnumbered tears
Stern Time would make us pay?

Belovèd, we have wept since those white hours
We filched, as lovers may.
But, oh, the dream, the dream of youth and flowers,
Time cannot take away!

RANDOLPH FORBES.



WHEN a man marries for the loaves and fishes, he usually loafs and fishes.

THE INITIATION

By Ethel M. Kelley

IN a certain little city, neither over-wise nor witty,
Where they bow down to Convention with a deprecating air,
Lived a gentle little maiden, who was somewhat overladen
With a message from the muses, reckoned rare.

For she earned her Winter bonnets by a trick of writing sonnets,
Ballads, madrigals and rondeaux, triolets and other things,
She had "lapses" truly Wegg-like, and she rode her ready "Peg" like
As mermaid takes to swimming, or as redbreast sings.

Now for prose, the waiting themes are as innumerable as dreams are,
Embarrassing to contemplate so varied do they run,
But when you are writing verses—why, we all know where the curse is!—
There's but one absorbing subject—only one.

So she wrote of love eternal, and in every monthly journal
Published tender little lyrics, or a wail of love unblest.
She enjoyed herself immensely, for she took herself intensely,
And because she knew no better, did her best.

Now, this maiden had a dimple, was addicted to the simple
Dimitities with drooping shoulders, and a rose behind her ear;
She was given to the tragic, and she never struck an adject-
Tive that pleased her, but she used it without fear.

But the elderly bridge-whisters, and the sewing-circle sisters
And her mother's friends the members of the oldest woman's club,
And the major and the colonel, read her poem, "Love Eternal,"
And each in turn administered a snub.

Then her parents tried to stop her. "What about it isn't proper
When I've done the best I can do, and I've really made a hit?
Why is everybody frowning when I write like Mrs. Browning?—
Only greatly worse than she did, I admit!"

But the Grundies still pursued her, and her intimates beshrewed her
Till she cried in desperation, "I am going to New York
Where I'll be appreciated, understood, not underrated,
And I'll hear, upon occasion, clever talk."

So she packed a bulging suit-case, and she turned a resolute face
Toward the island where Manhattan points its steeples in the sun;
With her work to introduce her, they were eager to produce her
In the circle that she had her eyes upon.

There were poets much assorted, both domestic and imported,
 Collected there from everywhere—from Kansas and from Rome,
 Both plebeians and patricians, who discussed their own editions—
 But still her parents' letters read, "Come home!"

Though her poems were impassioned, she was still a bit old-fashioned;
 She'd been hemmed around with "mustn'ts" since her bow at seventeen,
 Her code the strict conventional—I'd really hate to mention all
 The things she didn't know and hadn't seen.

So a kindly delegation undertook her education—
 The pace they moved more expedite than any she had known—
 Until she was so desperate, she couldn't freely respirate,
 And babbled she must have a chaperon.

She adored their little lunches, but she couldn't stand their punches—
 And woe to her bohemia discovers when she's green!—
 But she entered conversation with an eager animation
 Till she stammered, "But, I don't know what you mean."

She talked about her spirit, and they grinned with joy to hear it;
 She gave them "poet-soul" and "art" and all the other rot.
 She would early have learned better, it was most unkind to let her,
 But there was no kindly counsel on the spot.

When her eyes were opened wider, and she knew how they had guyed her,
 She fled into her boarding-house, and bitterly she cried,
 But e'er she wept her fill—oh! she nearly soaked her pillow—
 And turned it till she drenched the other side!

But it happened at that minute—surely Providence was in it—
 The maid was toiling up the stairs to carry her a card,
 So she hurried to the pitcher—if she'd been a trifle richer
 She'd been given running water, running *hard*.

Then she bathed her eyes and dried 'em, and she powdered 'em to hide 'em,
 She pompadoured her fluffy hair, and stuck in every comb;
 And a maiden sadder—wiser, who was needing an adviser,
 Went down to greet the welcome "Man from Home"!

When she wept upon his shoulder, with great promptness he consoled her,
 Considering they parted months before and "merely friends,"
 Which I won't attempt to dwell upon, for really I am well upon
 The place a clever story always ends.

But what I will give space is, that after their embraces
 Found their proper culmination in a long and ardent kiss,
 I record the matter drily—but she whispered to him shyly,
 "Oh! my love, I didn't know it was like this."

There are morals here—good gracious!—and they're most of them fallacious,
 But there's one to which I testify. and so can any bard
 Who will take you for confessor: that the way of the transgressor—
 And the young, aspiring poet's—*always hard!*

LOST BY A NOSE

By Seumas MacManus

HALF-A-DOZEN wet and weary tramps we were that evening on which we wended our way up the boulder-strewn avenue that stretched in front of the Tullinagrains manse. For the ten days during which we had been following a vagabond existence, we had not had one shower of rain till, on this evening, the deluge came unawares, catching us in the middle of the wildest mountain wastes of Donegal. We were at least ten miles from everywhere. Taking a survey of the country, from the mountain-side, Michael Angelo singled out the only big and slated building showing upon the landscape, and said, be it barrack or workhouse, at least there would be room within its walls for six orphans; and we struck a bee-line for it.

En route, we learned that it was the manse. Though there were only four Presbyterian families in the parish, these had their minister and place of worship; and the building toward which we bent our steps, once a shooting-lodge, had been presented to them for a manse, by the father of the present landlord, and was now occupied by the Rev. Mr. Carson, who had been parson here for twelve years.

"Yous'll get a *cead faillte* from Misther Carson," the country people told us, "for he's the heart and sowl of a rale good fella, and no mistake. There's none there but himself and his oul' housekeeper, and he has rooms for a rigimint."

They spake truth. Mr. Carson himself it was who opened the door to us. He was a slim man, past forty years of age, genial and hearty, while a florid-

tinged nose accentuated both his humanness and the comicality of his look. Even the pitying look which he cast on the six forlorn and streaming objects that stood upon his doorstep could not conceal the all-too-apparent merriment of his nature. In an instant the sides of his mouth drooped so palpably, and his lips involuntarily quivered so, that all six of us gave way to an unrestrainable burst of laughter, in which Mr. Carson soon joined; and then, regarding one another, and realizing the ludicrously pitiable figures we cut, our laughter rang again and again.

"Well, we *are* a comical crowd," we admitted, when we found our speech.

"None the less welcome, lads, on that account," said Mr. Carson, "for this neighborhood feels monotonous enough sometimes."

"We're on a holiday tramp through Donegal," Shanks said.

"And I hope," said Mr. Carson, with suspiciously trembling mouth, "you are enjoying your holiday to the uttermost."

We were all standing within now, in a big, wide hall, and from each of us a streamlet was meandering over the floor, at will.

"Yes, we are enjoying it," we said, and out rang a loud laugh again. For the comicality of our state only came home to us now that we saw it reflected in the good minister's eyes.

"Ye've got to try to make yourselves at home here for this evening and night," he went on; "you had better wring one another out as quickly as you can. Come with me."

He led the way up-stairs, we dragging ourselves clumsily after him, and

showed us into a couple of large bedrooms. "Wait now," he said, "and I'll fetch ye towels, and woollen shirts, and as many odds and ends of clothes as I can manage to muster."

He came back with armful after armful of necessaries, piling them on the beds.

"There," he said, at length, "that's all the clothing in the house, except what is on my back—and except Kitty's, the housekeeper's. You'll have to squabble among yourselves for the least unsuitable. When you have decked yourselves, I don't anticipate that you'll feel as faultlessly dressed as you would wish if you were going to do Grafton street in Dublin; but I'll guarantee that you'll one and all look picturesque—Kitty is meanwhile concocting a meal for you."

When dressed, we did undoubtedly look picturesque; and our roars of laughter, each at the others' expense, were again and again repeated.

Of course—for we had all been soaked to the skin—we could not resume a single article of our own apparel. The clothes provided for us by our host were all clerical. Some of them had evidently been retired from service many, many years ago, and were green with age; some were fresh from the tailor's goose; and while we were of every size and shape between giant and dwarf, the dimensions of Mr. Carson's suits were monotonously similar. Shanks looked like a lubberly schoolboy who had grown out of his clothes, and Misery like—so Blazes put it—"a hap'orth of tobacco in a sack;" while it took three men to confine Dumpy in a vest, which, one minute after, burst with a great report, scattering its buttons afar, like the contents of an exploded bomb. Fortunately, all of us got shirts and breeches of one kind and another, but a couple got waistcoats and no coat, while another few got coats but no waistcoat. While the former, before descending to dinner, compromised with good taste by either buttoning or pinning the coats across, the latter had to accept—one a frieze top-coat with

three-fold cape, the other a long yellow oil-coat.

So 'twas little wonder we laughed, and less wonder that the minister laughed, as he marched us down to the dining-room.

Our appetites were keen; and our mouths watered when we beheld the table; for a stack of potatoes, piping hot, and laughing through their jackets, occupied the centre; and a huge dish of rashers and eggs, and another of roasted fowls, flanked it—all embodying the substantiality that a hungry man craves.

"There'll be whiskey later, lads," Mr. Carson told us. "I'd have had it long since for you, knowing how badly you needed it after such a soaking, only that I could not get a messenger earlier. Before your dinner is finished, I'll have you a bottle of as good potteen as was ever buried beneath heather."

Such was our reverend host's easy, hearty manner, that, ere dinner was well begun, we were already feeling very much at home with him. His joke was the readiest and his laugh the freest of any at the table. That he was a widely-read man, and a thinker and scholar, we quickly and intuitively learned. And it puzzled us to know how or why one of such marked abilities, mental and social, should come to be buried away here.

Yet speculations anent our host did not make us unmindful of the duties we owed the table, or the relish we brought to it. Each man ate heartily and well, while at the same time enjoying to the utmost Mr. Carson's pleasant table-talk. And our enjoyment, as you may well suppose, was not one whit diminished when, at length, we caught sight of a ragged, barefoot boy with a big, black bottle in his arms, whisking past the dining-room windows.

"By all that's jolly, here's my messenger back," said Mr. Carson, as he rose from the table, and went to attend the door himself.

"Hooray!" he said, as, coming into the room again, he held the bottle up to view.

We cried "Hooray!" with hearty good will.

"This, boys, is a particular drop from the cellar—a repository under the sod—of the last and cleverest illicit distiller in the mountains of Donegal. It's mountain dew of mountain dew; and I guarantee it to warm the marrow in your bones—your glasses, gentlemen!"

He poured out a generous libation to each of us; but, to our surprise, not any for himself.

"Where," said Shanks, "is your own? We are going to drink your health."

Mr. Carson first smiled, and then laughed light-heartedly. "I'm off it just now," he said. "I'll take mine in Adam's ale."

"Nonsense," said Shanks. "We aren't going to drink if you don't. Just a little."

The minister shook his head by way of reply. Then he added, "I don't drink spirits."

Involuntarily, the gaze of all six of us here rested upon the minister's nose. But, instantly realizing the hurtfulness of the undesigned action, we hastily looked elsewhere next moment.

We were sure we had embarrassed the good man; and our embarrassment was not lessened when Mr. Carson added:

"In fact, I have never drunk spirits."

Our vexation at ourselves for having driven the poor man into the telling of such a palpably awkward untruth was extreme.

Now, Misery had more audacious nerve than the size of him would seem to warrant; and he spoke up, and said:

"We ask your pardon, sir. We are sure you never drank spirits. It was in joke our friend asked you to fill your glass. Here's to you!"

We all joined Misery in drinking the minister's health, and, stealthily observing Mr. Carson's features, to our intense surprise we noticed that, far from being overcome with embarrassment, he seemed to have not a little trouble containing some fit of inward merriment. And, by the time we had

our glasses on the table again, he laughed outright, and laughed long.

Our mystification was great.

"I humbly ask your pardon, my friends," he pleaded, when he could, "but I assure you I could not help it." We were still looking as grave as puzzled men will. "I know you did not believe my statement; I knew you would not. No apologies—no apologies, pray! I knew only too well that circumstantial evidence was against me." Here, to our complete embarrassment, Mr. Carson laid his forefinger on his nose.

Some of us blushed; all of us would have blushed if we could.

"Pray, no apology, I said," he interrupted Misery, who would have protested. "Circumstantial evidence, I repeat," and he continued tapping the embarrassing nose with his forefinger, "is strongly against me. I saw that in the look of every one of you; for, taken by surprise, you could not conceal it. It isn't the first—nor the ninety-first—time that the mistake has happened. To all who do not know me I readily pass for an habitual drunkard. But, friends, the bald fact is that I was born to this nose."

Though, for a little, we found it hard to join him in taking a merry view of our mistake, he soon talked us into his point of view, when, at length, we consented to laugh. And we were soon convinced of the fact that, far from loving the flowing bowl, Mr. Carson was absolutely the strictest abstainer we had ever met with.

"You, gentlemen," he said, at length, "accept the testimony of my lips as against that of my nose; but, ha! ha! not all strangers do so. I don't, indeed, readily offer explanation; but in many cases, as in the present, I am betrayed into a position in which I must explain. And, furthermore, I may tell you that but for this nose, and but for a misbelieving public, I would be to-day ministering to the spiritual needs of one of the finest and richest parishes in the north of Ireland, instead of vegetating, as I am,

at the back of God-speed. It's a story in itself, and an extraordinary one; and I'll tell it to ye after we've got our pipes."

When we had finished a meal, as grateful certainly as any meal in our recollection, we all adjourned to the kitchen, a great, roomy apartment, with a large hearth-fire that both lighted and warmed it to its remotest corners.

"I make no apologies for fetching you here," said our host. "It's the very place for you; it's warm and it's homelike; any friends I entertain love to come here, and sit and chat in the firelight, after dinner. I always come here in the evenings, myself, and smoke and read."

He needed not to make apology. It was delightful to sit in the firelight, in a circle around the wide hearth, and light our pipes, and cross our legs, and harken to the rain beating against the window-panes.

"Now then, sir," said Shanks, "we're in as happy a frame of mind as we would be to listen to your story."

"I like a happy audience. It's good for both the story and storyteller," said our host, as he prepared himself.

"And still better for the audience," said Misery.

"Yes, and better for the audience, I admit."

"When I went to college—to Trinity—at first, I was not intended for the ministry. Indeed, I hardly know what I was intended for. Only this—I meant to get a good education, anyhow, and let my vocation settle itself in its own good time. And a pretty good education, I consider, I did get. My friends used to flatter me that I was fairly clever, and I know that I chanced, somehow or other, to stumble upon sizarships, till at length I graduated—more, mind you, by good luck, I do firmly believe, than merit—graduated with honors.

"On my holidays, then, I went with a schoolmate to the County Antrim—Roscommon was my own county—and there met an old maiden lady

named Miss M'Clane. I met her at tea, at my chum's house, the second day I was there. I was beside her at the tea-table, and discussed theology and hygiene—her pet hobbies—with her. She really interested me very much; and when, on the second evening after, we again met at another tea-table, we resumed our hygienic and theological discussions—across the table this time. It appears that I interested her quite as much; for after our second meeting she confided to Brady—Brady was the chum I was visiting with—confided to Brady her belief that I was a most enlightened and most interesting young man, that she was very much predisposed in my favor, and that it was a great pity I—was—was— 'What do you mean, Miss M'Clane?' said Brady. 'Well,' she said, hesitatingly, 'I mean—I refer to—to—pardon me, but I couldn't help observing the shade of his nose!'

"Now, as I was a most bigoted total-abstainer, that nose of mine had been always all the greater joke among the boys in Trinity. And Brady could not help roaring with laughter now—which very much confused poor Miss M'Clane. When Brady could, he explained the point of the joke, and, to Miss M'Clane's relief, succeeded in convincing her of the true state of matters.

"So, the very first opportunity she got, the kind lady assured me of her interest in me, and strongly urged me to go in for the ministry, for which she believed me to be particularly suited. 'And if you consent,' she said, 'and enter the course at once, I'll guarantee you a call to the third best parish in Ireland—my own parish of Ballindrum, in the County Tyrone.' Her brother, she went on to state, was the biggest landholder, as well as the most important benefactor of the Presbyterian Church, in this most Presbyterian parish; and she usually took upon her shoulders most of the lay-work of the parish; and with the elders, her brother's word—which was to say her word—was law.

"The offer was enticing, sure enough. Brady knew Ballindrum well, and told me I would be the luckiest dog of ten years if I got such a parish. Miss M'Clane, he said, was undoubtedly, even more than the minister, the spokesman of the church there. 'If you know a good thing, Tom Carson,' said he, 'you'll jump with her offer.'

"And I did. I may not have had any overwhelmingly irresistible vocation for the ministry, I give in; but no more have five-sixths of those that enter it every year; and I know that in turning over in my mind the various professions, for purpose of selection, this one had occupied my thought as much as, if not rather more than, any other. So, within thirty-six hours after my talk with Miss M'Clane, I had chosen my profession.

"A two years' course of divinity in the college in Belfast, during which I'm proud to say I bore off not a few laurels—to the delight of good Miss M'Clane's heart—and I emerged a minister, qualified to take spiritual charge of any congregation of Presbyterian souls in the kingdom of Ireland.

"My patroness was, perhaps, even more rejoiced than myself. She, all along, looked upon me as her personal protégé, and shone, as, good soul, she believed, in my reflected glory. In another three months the Reverend Mr. Hutton, a very old man, would resign charge of the parish—which he had held for the past five-and-thirty years. I was assured of a unanimous call from the Presbytery then, and till then I might rest upon my oars.

"But, behold ye! just three weeks before the date of Mr. Hutton's retirement, Miss M'Clane wrote me that, as there were rumors of a rival in the air, I had better come along at once, and make the acquaintance of the elders. So, with little delay, I threw a few articles into my portmanteau, and hastened down to the County Tyrone. Miss M'Clane explained to me that the rumored opposition originated with two of the elders whose wives had, twelve months ago, taken umbrage against her for some fancied—purely

fancied—slight. 'These two have induced Mr. Donaldson, of Stewartstown—a very able man, without doubt—to consent to let his name go forward,' she said, 'and if they only had the power—which, thank goodness, they haven't—they'd work you and me mischief. They are doing their very best,' she said, 'to weaken my influence, by ridiculing the Presbytery that allows itself "to be ruled by an old woman"—so they put it. I thought it wise to bring you on the ground anyhow, knowing well that your personal intercourse with the body of the elders will still more predispose them in your favor, and demoralize the malcontents.'

"I thought with Miss M'Clane. But, what neither of us foresaw, my presence had its disadvantages, as well as its advantages. On the very second night after my arrival, a deputation of the elders—the favorably disposed ones—waited upon Miss M'Clane, and, after a deal of confused stammering and loads of apologies, gave her to understand that, while they were very certain that the clever young Mr. Carson was, *now*, a model of all the virtues, particularly that of temperance, they begged to draw her attention to a fact of which, they were fully convinced, she, being a lady, was not aware—a fact, nevertheless, that was only too painfully patent to them, which would be even more obvious to the more sinful among their erring brethren, and be a grave scandal to the parish at large, in case the young gentleman in question got the call, which it had been their certain intention to give him—to wit, that Mr. Carson had, unfortunately—indeed, like many an otherwise good and holy man—in his earlier career been over-indulgent in the use of intoxicating liquors.

"It took Miss M'Clane all she could do in two interviews with them, and she and myself in another interview, to allay the well-founded suspicions of the good men, and to assure them that, despite the seeming evidence of my nose, I was, and always had been, so far

as abstention from drink was concerned, a model among young men. The most skeptical among them was Mr. M'Quaig, the presiding elder, a most religious old man, and a wealthy mill-owner, whose greatest detestation and black horror was drink. But the candor of my manner, joined to the warmth of my protestations, at length succeeded in quieting even his soul, and winning him over.

"But to the opposition, my nose was truly a godsend, and they made excellent use of it. Give a slander only five minutes' start upon a go-cart, and truth on a hurricane won't overtake it. A very great many of the favorably disposed, though ostensibly accepting their elders' assurance that the shade of my nose was an heirloom only, resignedly shook their heads over the business, in private, and said, 'Well, we hope so; but—we'll see.'

"Slanderous notices were written at night upon the dead walls of the village, and on the doors of those who favored me, and even on my own door—for, through Miss M'Clane's kindness, I had a neat little house about five hundred yards outside the village, devoted temporarily to myself. 'A jolly dog you are, Thomas,' and, 'Well, have you had your *morning* yet?' were specimens of the facetious things I discovered on my own hall-door of a morning. And things were put down more grossly on the public hoardings.

"Ten days before the Presbytery meeting, at which I expected to be called, I preached a carefully-prepared and long-rehearsed sermon, and with such address did I acquit myself that, to the joy of Miss M'Clane and all my more earnest friends, nine-tenths of the congregation, asserting that I was a cruelly-wronged man, were vehement in demanding my call, and the remaining tenth were silenced and confounded. 'Let me congratulate you,' said old Mr. M'Quaig, wringing my hand, in the presence of an admiring group, after service, 'let me congratulate you on your certain call on Wednesday week next. You have not merely vindicated and reëstablished your worthy reputation,

but, because of the vile slanders that were meant to damage you, you stand, to-day, higher than ever before.' I was both proud and happy, I'll admit. I preached again, on the Sunday following, and repeated my success. And so assured was I now of the parish of Ballindrum that, on Monday, I made arrangements to bring on my books and some articles of furniture from home, and engaged, at a very moderate rent, from Miss M'Clane, the house in which I was then domiciled, and which pleased me much, and wrote to a couple of chums, informing them that by the time my letters reached them, I would have been called to the third-best parish in Ireland—inviting them, at the same time, to come on a long visit to me, as soon as ever they could. Then I—figuratively speaking—sat me down in my easiest easy-chair to await Fortune's welcome knock at my room-door.

"Now, Miss M'Clane owned a black donkey on which she doted, and this donkey was kept upon the lawn in front of my house. At an unearthly hour on Tuesday morning, I was awakened from pleasant dreams by a chorus of braying right under my window, and the sound of much rushing and trampling. It wasn't the bray of one donkey; but it seemed to me as if all the donkeys in creation had been collected in front of my house, and commanded to bray. I jumped up and drew the curtains of my window, and beheld not less than half-a-dozen donkeys capering over the lawn, and a couple of them within a flower-enclosure, trampling and helping themselves to a dainty meal!

"I looked at my watch, and saw that it was not yet quite four o'clock, though, being in the Summer-time, it was already day. In my then state of collegiate ignorance, I thought a donkey should consent to be frightened by the same simple expedient that sufficed for a hen; so, I leaned out of the window and cried, 'Shoo!' But the donkeys did not go. Then I cried, 'Shoo!' in a louder and fiercer manner. But they were still unalarmed. And, cry 'Shoo!' as I might, with the ac-

companionment of the most terrorizing gestures I could command, the animals, to my exceeding wrath, paid no more heed to me than if I had been merely acting for my own amusement.

"'Upon my word,' said I, then, 'I'll make some of ye feel sore,' and, pulling on a pair of slippers and a dressing-gown, I dashed down-stairs, knotting the girdle as I went. I snatched up an umbrella in the hall—a handsome silk one, which Miss M'Clane had presented to me on the day after I preached my first sermon—and rushed from the door, making a furious onslaught upon the animals, which, with many sore blows, I quickly drove off the lawn, and through the front gate, which—by unfortunate accident—had been left open on the night before. Even when they were out I laid on them with the umbrella, regardless of cost, and sent them trotting along the road in the direction of the village. It was only then I recalled that these were the performing donkeys belonging to a circus which had arrived at Ballindrum on the previous evening.

"Then I went into the house again, and thankfully slipped into bed. But, when I had been lying barely five minutes, I jumped into the middle of the floor with a cry of alarm and vexation. In my wrathful excitement, I had unthinkingly forgotten Miss M'Clane's donkey, and whacked it out with the others!

"In a moment, I was in my slippers and dressing-gown again, and rushing down-stairs three steps at a time. The umbrella was, after its late use, a very sorry-looking spectacle, but I snatched it up, and on the back of my head I clapped the first covering that came to hand, which, by the same token, happened to be a castor-hat. I slammed the door after me as I bounded out.

"The donkeys had disappeared from view; but as it was yet only four o'clock in the morning, when no Christian would be afoot, the ludicrous figure that I knew I must cut did not deter me from dashing off at top-speed in the

direction of the village, in hope of being able to overtake them.

"I was in luck; for just around a bend, which hid the road from the village, all seven donkeys had paused, while four of them had lain down on their backs on the dry, dusty road, and were having what appeared to be an exquisitely enjoyable roll to themselves. I dashed into their midst, brandishing my umbrella, whereat, to my bewildered astonishment, two of them instantly simulated death, while another three raised themselves on their hind-legs, and began moving round me in a sort of travesty upon a dance. Then the fact flashed on me that, in my strange dress and equipment, they evidently mistook me for the clown. I angrily struck two of the stupid dancers over the nose with the butt of my umbrella, whereat they quickened and enlivened their steps, and one lifted his voice in a harrowing bray, in which he was immediately joined by three or four others.

"I now sorely realized the extreme ludicrousness of my position, and, for the first time in my life, I believe, felt strongly inclined to curse—to curse Miss M'Clane's donkey which, now distinguishing, I walloped sorely to drive him from the ring; and this caused him to bray with renewed vehemence. Around the bend of the road, coming from the direction of the village, a man appeared, and stood in amazement as he beheld the strange performance which burst upon him. It was none other than Mr. M'Quaig, the presiding elder of the Presbytery. Paralyzed though I was for the moment, I remembered that his mills—wherein night-thefts had been of late committed—were situated out on this road.

"Mr. M'Quaig stood for a moment, as if paralyzed, too. But for a minute only. Then he turned and speedily disappeared in the direction of the village.

"I, too, turned, and sped home, a wrathful and a mortified man. And my wrath and my mortification were not a whit diminished, when, having

reached the house, I found I had thoughtlessly closed the self-locking door behind me, when I emerged, and was now in a pretty predicament. I tried all the lower windows; but, as I expected, they were fastened. The back-door was fastened. The window of my own bedroom, which I had opened for the purpose of 'shooing' the donkeys, was still down. It was my only chance; but how was I to reach it? It was only after a deal of frenzied wandering up and down, and futile scheming, that I recollected a ladder which leaned against a haystack a few fields away. I flew up the road, and into the haystack field, got the ladder on my shoulder, and started for the house again at a run; but my ankle bent, and I reeled and fell upon the road, with the ladder on top of me. As I squirmed on the ground, I caught sight of two policemen hurrying from the village. I arose quickly, and, limping, half-carried, half-dragged the ladder the remainder of the way, and had, by its means, got in my bedroom window before the policemen had reached the scene. I threw the ladder backward on the lawn, banged up my window, and, in violent wrath with myself, old M'Quaig, Miss M'Clane, and her vile donkey, and the whole world, threw myself on the bed.

"A few minutes later, observing through half-closed eyes that the room suddenly darkened, I glanced toward the window, and there, to my horror and disgust, observed the forbidding countenance of one of the rascally police pressed against the pane. I was petrified. After he had taken a good, long look, he turned, and, evidently calling to his comrade on the road below, cried out, 'He's all right. He's in bed—slippers, castor-hat and all. I think he'll do—'on't he?'"

"Boys, if I told ye my blood boiled, it would look like a figure of speech to ye only. But I assure ye, if ever a man's blood boiled, mine did. With one jump I was on the floor. But I had forgotten my ankle, and I staggered and fell. The scoundrel observed all. I was on my feet again,

and had the window torn down in a jiffy, and the black villain was then half-way down the ladder. I put my hands to it, to heave both him and it over, and give him his deserts; but he saved his skin by jumping the other half; so, the ladder only, was thrown over—and smashed. I sorely regretted it was not the policeman. I snatched up a brass candlestick, and heaved it at him. He dodged it; and, to my vexation, it only grazed his nose in passing. But as he bounded toward the gate, I caught the impertinent villain on the back of the head with a hair-brush. He and his comrade took position, just outside the gate, and stood patiently enough, while I—which was stupidly wrong of me I well knew when I reflected on it in cold blood afterward—shook my fist at them, and gave them a thorough tongue-banging, sparing not upon them all the vile names which the ungovernable wrath of a thoroughly outraged man could prompt. But when, after listening to me patiently till my breath and my vocabulary were exhausted, the scoundrel who had climbed to my window said, in a voice intended to be soothing, 'Plaise, sir, *do* go to yer bed now,' I felt it was the last straw. I banged up the window, drew down the curtains, and flinging myself upon the bed again, soon slept the sleep of exhaustion—exhaustion of both body and soul.

"It was eleven o'clock in the day when I was awakened by a loud knocking at the door. There was a lad at the door with a note for me. I made him throw it up to me. He said there was an answer desired. It was addressed in Miss M'Clane's own methodical handwriting.

"I opened it. It read:

"'Miss M'Clane desires to know if Mr. Carson will find it convenient to oblige her by quitting Ballindrum, at latest by the 6.11 P.M. train. There is also a train at 3.13 if Mr. Carson could conveniently avail himself of it.'

"I frenziedly rushed to my desk, and scrawled off an all but unreadable note, which meant to say:

"MY DEAR MISS M'CLANE: An awful mistake has been made. As soon as I dress shall hurry into Ballindrum, and explain the whole matter.

"Very sincerely yours,
"THOMAS CARSON."

"I had dressed, and was opening the door to dash into Ballindrum, when the messenger arrived again with another note, and also my battered and broken umbrella—both of which he gravely presented to me.

"I sat down on the hall-chair and read:

"Miss M'Clane commands Mr. Thomas Carson not on any account to come to, or near, her house or grounds. She is well aware that there has been an awful mistake. Miss M'Clane begs to say that, in Mr. Robert M'Clane's (Justice of the Peace) office there are now, and have been for the past two hours, Mr. Matthew M'Quaig, and two police constables, the latter demanding summonses against Mr. Thomas Carson for (1) being drunk and disorderly on the public road, (2) assault and battery, and (3) using abusive and threatening language toward officers of the peace in discharge of their duty. Mr. Robert M'Clane—straining justice—withholds the summonses demanded, and will continue to withhold

them, till the 6.11 train has left Ballindrum this afternoon—unless Mr. Thomas Carson has the audacity to present himself in Ballindrum otherwise than en route for the railway station. Miss M'Clane would again remind Mr. Thomas Carson that there is also a convenient train at 3.13 P.M., and she sends an umbrella which the police constables picked up on the road at four o'clock this morning, and which she has some reason to believe belongs to Mr. Thomas Carson. Mr. Thomas Carson is requested not to attempt any further communication with Miss M'Clane; otherwise the officers of the law will, reluctantly, be allowed to do their duty."

"Then I——"

"—took the six-eleven train for home—if you were wise," Shanks interrupted.

"You are wrong, my friend," said Mr. Carson. "I was wiser—and took the three-thirteen train—bidding good-bye to Ballindrum forever."

But I know that—selfish beings—when we were saying good-bye to the genial minister next morning, we blessed the ill-luck that blew him to Tullinagrainy.



THE WITNESS

I SAW him kiss her—dim the light
But full sufficient for the sight.
He bent to give the token—so;
She raised, on dainty, slippered toe;
Thus does the flower with eagerness
Receive the hawk-moth's bold caress,
When floats the Summer moon above,
And all the garden thrills with love.

I saw him kiss her—face met face,
And shrank she not from his embrace,
While at this conquest of her lips
I tingled to the finger-tips,
For none a better view e'er had
Of willing maid and lucky lad.
Yet why the passage sweet discuss?
The tell-tale mirror showed me *us*!

EDWIN L. SABIN.

THE OUTBOUND SHIPS

THE long dark line of the leaden sky
 Leans over a sea of gray,
 And the outbound ships go dimly by,
 And the rain shuts out the day.

Through the driving wind they go, they go,
 Dark hulls on the sea's dark verge;
 And the sound of her voice seems still to blow
 Through the parting wastes of surge.

But ne'er will her warm eyes turn to me,
 And her hand seek mine again;
 And never again shall I watch the sea
 At her side in the lonely rain.

She can wait no more in the driving mist,
 With rain on her wind-blown hair,
 And the grave, pale face I sadly kissed
 In that salt and misty air!

And ship by ship as they outward go,
 Through the years and the driving rain,
 Each ship will shadow my heart, I know,
 With a fleeting sense of pain!

ARTHUR STRINGER.



ONE WAY

HEWITT—How soon we are forgotten!

JEWETT—Yes, if you want to be remembered, borrow money.



TAKING NO CHANCES

PRIVATE SECRETARY—Will you see anybody to-day, sir?

GREAT MAGNATE—Yes, everybody that comes. I'm advertising for a cook.

THE DEMON GOLF-BALL

By Herbert D. Ward

IT was on the piazza of the Passamaquoddy Golf Club-house that I first met Lieutenant Frank Rattler, of the United States Navy. Not two miles away the North Atlantic Squadron lay majestically at anchor. It was late in June, the lieutenant was in white duck, and we punctuated our introduction by a long, cool drink.

Lieutenant Rattler's eyes, if they had belonged to a civilian, might have been called "dare-devil;" but when I understood he was in command of the torpedo boat *Decatur*, and that he slept with a ton of guncotton under his berth, I recognized that they were only fearlessly patriotic.

We were both about the same age, and we lost no time in preliminaries. We had a few mutual friends in Washington, and he was an enthusiast in golf. That was enough. In less than half an hour we had proceeded to the first tee, followed by caddies ready to praise or jeer.

"How do you play?" Rattler asked, lighting a cigarette. "I'm only a duffer. You see, there were no links in Manila, and I've played only a few times in Washington during the last year, and once over this course. I don't suppose I can hit a balloon."

"Oh, so-so," I answered, evasively. The fact of it was that I had held the club championship for two seasons, and had once beaten Travis. A real golfer doesn't brag of that sort of thing.

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's play for a dollar a hole, just to keep our interest up." Rattler looked at me with the eyes of a man who

could bluff without the flicker of a muscle, if it came to a pinch.

"Well," I said, wearily, "it's just like picking up a nugget of gold on the street; but I'll go you, if you insist."

It is odd how such little wagers get abroad as soon as made. Tom Kerr, the president of the club, casually strolled down and sat on the bench, and with him came Florence Wither- spoon. Where did she come from? Besides, a number of others grouped themselves on the piazza, evidently sizing us up.

I never could understand why, but Florence either impelled me to my best, or took all the starch out of me. I would rather see a gleam of approval in her eye than anything else in the world, and yet she made even me unaccountably nervous. I had engaged her as partner for the great Fourth-of-July foursome tournament, and was looking forward to that event as the crowning incident in my life. I could see her estimating both of us, and then she whispered to Kerr. As Kerr is married, I never could see any objection to her trotting around the course with him. She never did it in forty-eight with me; in fact, she never did play her full game with me. I suppose that is one of the inexplicable paradoxes of the golf-field.

"Left or right?" I asked the lieutenant.

"Right," he said, and I took the honor. He might have known. Rattler is a beefy fellow, fully six feet, and I suppose women call him handsome. Captain Barker told me he was the bravest and the coolest officer on his ship during the war. To look at him

no one would suspect him of heroism. Yet he has a quiet imperturbability that the best of us civilians lack. I suppose it is the superior habit that grows with command. But Rattler is an awfully decent sort of fellow, as I found out.

With the quiet, polite curiosity that is paid to an unknown opponent, he watched me address the ball. He even gave me the compliment of refraining from a few puffs of his cigarette as I cried, "Fore!" I am slender and not six feet, yet I fancy there is not a more graceful player in the state. This is not to be called conceit. I have been told so too often not to believe it.

The number-one hole lies up-hill from the tee, and the bunker is one hundred and eighty yards away—just far enough to penalize a fine drive. There are few men who can carry that bunker.

Florence Witherspoon was not ten feet behind me. I use the "Meteor." It flies better from wood than from an iron. My ball carried the bunker fully twenty yards, and lay white and saucy on the green slope beyond. It was with furtive satisfaction that I turned and caught Florence's eye. She appreciated a fine thing, and her flush showed it.

Although I cannot see myself as I drive, yet I divined the tremendous contrast between myself and my opponent. Adroitness was to be pitted against strength. I was counting the dollars in my pocket. The lieutenant took no time to waggle or address the ball. He was no gallery player, and had no dramatic instinct, such as you would naturally expect from a wearer of gold lace. After he had teed his ball, he raised his club, poised it for a moment in the air, without the least pretense of style, and then brought it down with terrific and unerring force. Such an awkward, clumsy stroke I never saw in my life. Somehow, I never thought of watching the ball. I was looking at the splendid, vigorous exhibition of strength, absolutely necessary in a campaign of war,

but entirely out of place on the golf-links.

Exclamations of wonder recalled me from brawn to ball. As far as I could see, the ball, that started like a bullet on a low trajectory, was still rising, without any evidence of being tired. It had already passed the bunker, soared over the apple-tree thirty yards beyond, and now disappeared over the rise of the hill, at least two hundred and fifty yards away. As the green was only three hundred and five yards off, that ball was by this time there, or had passed beyond like a frightened jack-rabbit. Such a drive had never before been witnessed on the links, and probably not in the country. It was phenomenal; it was marvelous. Nothing could explain it away, except that by some strange freak he had hit the ball ideally, and it had traveled as ideally-hit balls do.

In the midst of tumultuous applause, the lieutenant was the only one unconcerned. He handed his driver to the caddie in a natural way, never changed his face, and puffed with the serene content of one who had just accomplished the commonplace to his entire satisfaction.

I am a Yale graduate, and consequently have the reputation of never being beaten until the last hole is played. The fact that Florence Witherspoon and Tom Kerr immediately trailed behind us, followed by an eager gallery of a score or more, put me on my Harveyized plate, to use a battleship term. More holes are won on the approach and on the green than by superior driving, and that incontestable fact lightened the load of my responsibility a trifle.

To play the odd is always a handicap, but, in this instance, I pitched the ball on the green with a sharp stroke of my midiron, and foresaw a sure four. We then proceeded to the brow of the incline. Lieutenant Rattler had driven at least two hundred and sixty yards up-hill and over. It was a marvelous feat, and only a short pitch to the hole. It was an easy three, par golf. As it was, he landed

ten feet beyond, and we halved the hole in four.

The gallery applauded, liberally, and I caught a quick gleam of appreciation from Florence that was not meant to be intercepted. Ah, what would I not give to beat this tar, who was so nonchalantly teasing me on my own sward! I should have liked to box his old compass for him. If he had only been arrogant! But his modesty would have disarmed a ten-inch gun, it was so overwhelming. As I approached the second tee, you could feel a deep breath drawn all about.

This hole was a long one—five hundred and twenty yards over two bunkers, with a bogey of six. I was now cooled to a grim determination, and, realizing what I was “up against,” I proceeded with calm deliberation. I have been accused of playing like clockwork, but I notice that it is every tick that counts.

The first bunker is two hundred and twenty yards away, and when I say that I drove into the sand of it, from which I could drop back without penalty, I am not uttering an immodest exaggeration. Indeed, the rule about dropping back without penalty was made to fit my case. I have done it several times before.

As I stepped back, the lieutenant cast upon me a look of quiet amusement that might have been interpreted as either appreciation or sarcasm, according to your mood. He seemed so sincere that no one could help liking him as he rolled to the tee in an awkward, shipshape way. It seemed an impossibility that he could make two such phenomenal drives in succession—but he did. The ball soared the bunker, and came to a halt at least thirty yards beyond. The applause was tumultuous. I could not catch Florence’s eye, and comforted myself by saying, as I walked along with the lieutenant:

“By Jove, old fellow, that was a wonderful drive—a corker. What ball do you use?”

“Ball?” repeated Rattler, slowly—he never seemed to be in a hurry—“why—er—it’s my own make. It’s

just a little invention of my own. I am just having a few of them made in Washington to see how they go.”

“Go! Heavens!” I exclaimed. “They never stop! I never saw anything like it. I suppose you’ve got a new core. It ought to net you a fortune. You have patented it, of course?”

“No,” he answered, leisurely, with a whimsical smile, “I haven’t patented it yet.”

“Not patented a ball like that? I hope there are no infringements?”

“Oh, no,” he replied, puffing contemptively. “The ball is entirely a new invention. No one has ever thought of it before. I don’t think it will ever be very popular. But it does fly like the devil, doesn’t it?” he admitted, with boyish and artless enthusiasm.

“Flies?” I tried to discover an appropriate simile. “It flies like an albatross. What in thunder is it made of?”

“Well, you see”—Rattler took out his case and ignited another cigarette—“that’s my secret.”

“Oh, I beg your pardon!”

“Not at all, not at all. I’d just as lief tell you. You are different from most—er—civilians. You are unprejudiced. But, perhaps, you had better not mention the matter.”

“Lieutenant Rattler!” I spoke with formal dignity, as I lifted my ball out of the bunker, and receded with it far enough for a good brassie over the obstruction. “I did not mean to pry into such a secret. My enthusiasm over a miracle carried me away. What you tell me about it is in honorable confidence, of course.”

The “Meteor” that I play with is a better ball with a brassie even than with a driver. Indeed, the brassie is my favorite club. The handle is exactly the same length as the driver’s, and few there are who outplay me with it. The ball flew the second bunker easily, and we could see it resting two hundred yards away by the edge of the second green. I am sure I cannot account for the feeling, but I could have squeezed Florence in the sight of gods

and men for the look she gave me. I used to dream of playing the whole eighteen holes with Florence in par golf. It is curious how dreams lead you; they seem to interpret you better than you know yourself.

My eye has been trained for eight years now to address the ball, and I cannot understand why Rattler did not miss that brassie. It certainly was a "bum" lie. But he picked it out like a professional, and landed it *beyond* the green—a feat that had never before been accomplished on that hole. Perhaps the sighting of guns may become a necessary preliminary to the correct playing of the game.

The enthusiasm of the gallery was boundless. I noticed with sorrow that Florence split her new pair of white gloves, applauding. Would that I could evoke such a conclusive tribute of her admiration! And yet, if I had not played perfectly myself, I should have been hopelessly outclassed. As it was, my superior short game might compensate for his phenomenal long.

"As I was saying," Rattler whispered, as we sauntered easily along, "it's rather a queer discovery, which I would rather not have talked about, as you will see."

I waved my hand in deprecation.

"I was assigned for a year to Indian Head, down the Potomac from Washington, you know, where the Government manufactures its smokeless powder."

"*Smokeless powder!*"

"Exactly so—smokeless powder. You see, it occurred to me that, on account of its wonderful resiliency, it would make an ideal golf-ball. Do you notice how straight it flies?"

"Do you mean to tell me that that ball is made of smokeless powder?" I exclaimed, edging away from his cad-die, and feeling the color dashed from my face. "How many of them do you carry with you?"

"Generally not more than a dozen. You see, I lose a good many overdriving."

"But, good Lord, man!" I cried, glancing back where Florence With-

er walked like a Diana in the front rank, "that's enough to blow up the whole lot of us here! A brassie is bad enough, but an iron—!" Visions of a stupendous catastrophe dimmed my sight.

"Oh, nonsense, Mr. Huntress," Lieutenant Rattler spoke a little sharply. "Don't you suppose I know what I am about? I thought you were different, you see. Otherwise, I would not have told you. I think you play the odd."

He took his terrible iron out of his bag, and I shuddered as I addressed the ball. I always make it a rule to pitch *for* the hole on the approach. In doing so, once out of five times you negotiate a gobble. If it were not for my Yale "sand," I could not have pulled myself together. I played the odd, as usual, and landed dead. Instantly, I walked over and placed myself deliberately between Florence and my opponent's stroke. What might not the impact of an iron be upon the most explosive substance that our gunners use! The girl frowned heavily at my gaucherie, and dodged, even as Rattler played. On the sharp click of Rattler's iron, my heart stopped beating; but nothing happened. I felt trembling, desperate, heroic, ashamed. We halved the hole in four—two under bogey.

"I ought to explain to you, although you seem a bit nervous," continued the lieutenant, cheerfully, after the drives, when it fell to my usual lot to play the odd, thirty yards or so behind, "that it is perfectly impossible to explode our smokeless powder. You can set it on fire, pound it, maltreat it, do anything in the world you want to with it. It simply cannot explode. It is harmless as a kitten."

"Well, then, how in thunder do you fire it out of your guns, if nothing can explode it?" I demanded, taking a fresh ball from his hand and looking the pimply, volcanic disk over with minute care.

"Oh, that's different." A bland smile illumined his face. "It's exploded with black powder. A ful-

minate sets off the black powder, and the black sets off the smokeless. It's very simple."

"And that's the only way it can be exploded?"

"Absolutely. You can't imagine a charge of black powder lying loose on a golf-course, can you? Or in a caddie bag? Or in my pocket?"

"Not—ah—easily."

"Don't you want to try some—that is, after the match?" The lieutenant was not one of the kind to give an advantage away.

"Very much." I grasped eagerly at the suggestion, thinking of my Fourth-of-July match. "That is, if you can spare me a few. I guess I can stand it, if you can."

"All right," Rattler answered, genially. "I think I can spare you half-a-dozen. They ought to last you the season, with careful play. You can't cut them, and, as they are white clear through, you can't dirty them. It's a great ball!"

So the matter was pleasantly arranged. I don't wonder these naval officers are popular. Generous to a fault, with a cosmopolitan *savoir faire* that is irresistible, they combine all the qualities of good-fellowship.

I almost forgot to say that we halved the match, and every hole but four. I won the two short ones, which he overdrove with an iron, losing one ball, and on the two two-hundred-and-fifty-yard holes he landed each time on the green.

"It was the best match I ever had," said the lieutenant, as we shook hands after it was over. "I played better than I knew how. You are simply superb. Here they are."

I accepted the compliment and the smokeless balls with my natural modesty.

"Perhaps we had better not say anything about it," I suggested, a little lamely, storing them surreptitiously in my pocket.

"Far better not." Rattler flashed a boyish look of camaraderie upon me.

I looked in vain for Florence, hoping for a word of further appointment;

but Tom Kerr had somehow or other taken her away in his trap. He is a curiously made up man, and has a charming wife and home. I don't wholly understand him.

Fourth of July opened brilliant and boiling. My game wilts a little in the heat, and I generally, in an important match, have an extra caddie follow with several dozen balls in a pail of ice and salt. I thought it a wise precaution with the Rattler's little "demons," as I had christened the smokeless balls.

The booming of guns, the rapid-fire artillery of crackers and torpedoes, the acrid smell of powder that *would* not dissipate—these necessary and horrible adjuncts to a patriotic Fourth—did not add to the "nerve" required to win out in that great match. We were pitted against Bessie Swatt, who, as you remember, was the plucky runner-up in the last Woman's National Tournament, and Tom Kerr, the secretary of the National League, the president of the club, and the sandiest player I ever saw. It was *the* match of my life; but I had Florence and the demon golf-ball, and I had bet heavily to win.

Florence Witherspoon! Mere ink cannot describe that glorious creature. She was so beautiful, so cool, so self-possessed, so—so everything. She is an all-round sport, and an all-round woman. Is there any better combination in the world? Miss Swatt, who is considered to have a fine figure, looked shapeless beside her. Inwardly, I was volcanic with happiness, just to be her partner; but she never could have suspected the way I felt. I looked at her just as naturally and coolly as a brother might, as she came up with a flush of sweet femininity upon her face, and shook me frankly by the hand.

At that moment, I remembered the pail of iced balls. I selected the first one. It was cold, and felt absolutely harmless. My spirits rose. My conscience became stupefied. Still, it might just as well be wise to be cautious.

"Run ahead," I said to the boy, "to the second tee. I insist on your keep-

ing ahead this match. When I want you, I'll call you. Now trot!"

"What ball are you going to play to-day?" Florence asked, with pardonable curiosity.

She took the cold disk from my hand. To see those twenty-seven pennyweights of destruction in her soft palm gave me a momentary contraction of the heart.

"Oh, how nice and cold it is!"

"It's a new make," I said, as casually as possible, "and, if you don't mind, we'll try it to-day. They have been given to me as an advertisement."

"Just as you say," she conceded, with a charming recognition of the superiority of my judgment.

If I had been a proposing man, I might have said things then, but that would have ruined the game. At that moment, Tom Kerr strolled up. The two ladies drifted together politely, and the match was on.

I have never seen the links in such condition. There was not a single obstruction beyond bunkers and sheep. The course did not have a rock on it, and the greens, that had been carefully sanded in the Winter, were perfection. Were it not for a road that crossed the course between the sixth and seventh tees, the links would have been beyond criticism. But as this road was rarely traveled except by club-members, it was played across on the second stroke.

Confident as I felt and happy as I was, I could not help repeating to myself, whenever Florence hit the ball, "Nothing can explode it—nothing—except a charge of black powder."

With this comforting knowledge, I did not spare the demon ball. Like a live, intelligent thing it responded to my every stroke. It seemed to have almost a superhuman ability to roll out of each cuppy-place, and perch itself on an ideal tee. What a perfect ball! If it became common, courses would have to be doubled in length. As it was, the game was too easy. I began to feel like a felon. It was as if I were taking advantage of my opponents,

cheating them out of each succeeding hole.

"Oh, Mr. Huntress, isn't it too bad?" exclaimed Florence, with a charming pout, as we halved the fifth hole—the short one; "I hoped we could make a clean sweep, you are playing so superbly."

"It's you!" I answered, almost in a whisper. "It's always you! I could do anything with you as a partner." I don't suppose I noticed how pointed the remark was, for Florence blushed, vividly, and then moved a few paces away.

It is true we had won the first few holes, hands down. Not a mistake did Florence make. Her brassies were screamers, and her approach deadly. We certainly were an irresistible team, and the exhilaration of the tremendous pace was intoxicating.

It was my honor. I had exchanged the unmarred ball, with which we had thus far won so gloriously, for a new frappéd ball. The former was getting a little hot. I now felt a trifle easier. Besides, it was my match habit.

I had sent the lad on ahead with the pail of balls, upon the top of which the one I had played with had been carelessly dropped. I waited until he had almost reached the road. In a casual way I noticed a few boys in the road, and with no idea of carrying it, I called out, "Fore!" from force of habit. Just as the ball rose, my fore-caddie, having reached the road, set the pail down—it was rather heavy—and, turning his back upon it, became engrossed with the boys. This I could see distinctly, as we all noted the fly of the ball. The gentle wind behind seemed to give the demon wings. Would it never drop? Slowly, reluctantly, it began to descend. Great Cæsar! It was carrying the road. No! Yes!

"I'll bet it landed in the pail," Tom Kerr ejaculated, with a pleased wink at his partner, who was becoming a little peevish.

"Then I'll have to play it out," Florence answered, with a laugh. "What fun! I never played out of a champagne-cooler in my life."

Kerr drove ridiculously short, trying to press for advantage, and Florence and I ran ahead. It is remarkable how much happier I felt to be with her alone!

"I don't see that the boy is paying much attention," Florence observed. "What a nuisance these fire-crackers are! The Fourth of July is getting to be positively deadly!"

Evidently the boys were wrangling about the sending off of one of those giant fire-crackers, a foot or so long, that are the terror of a civilized community. A lad held it in his frenzied clutch, while the others stormed about him. In a spirit of either deviltry or envy, my boy was striking a match. He then surreptitiously touched off the huge fire-cracker, and ran, like a frightened dog, leaving the pail of balls behind. Florence and I dashed up. With one glance I saw that my ball *had* dropped plumb into the pail.

"Throw that away, little boy," Florence screamed, "it's lighted! It will kill you!"

That shriek sobered the struggling group. With a scared look the lad of the cracker took in the situation, and pitched the hissing thing quickly over his shoulder. It soared like a red devil, and dropped within the pail, on top of the half-dozen disks of smokeless powder!

Seeing what they had done, the boys took to their heels, and ran as fast as they could. They thought they had ruined a pailful of *common* balls, but I—

"My God!" I cried. "Black powder! Florence, run! For God's sake, darling, run!"

But she stood there, fearless, smiling, waiting for the cracker to explode. The other two were at a distance, coming up as slowly as they could.

"Caddie," I said, as steadily as possible, to the boy carrying my clubs, "drop your clubs and run to the clubhouse for some other balls. Hurry!"

The well-trained lad, quickly taking in the half of the situation, bounded away like a deer. There was no time

for talk. With one spring I was at the dear girl's side. I grasped her around the waist and ran—and ran—and ran! I did not hear her cries of protest. I did not heed her struggles. For my mind was reverberating with the horrible words, "You can't imagine a charge of black powder lying loose on a golf-course, can you?" And now—good Lord!—the horror of it! the irony of it! In my madness to win, I had brought it all upon her. "You can't imagine a charge of black—" A sound as of a thousand thunders filled my ears—a blast as of a thousand simoons hurled me headlong. "Florence—darling!" I gasped, and then I was no more.

The hum of voices trickled in my ears. It was as if some one else, not I, were listening to approaching sounds. I tried to open my eyes. As I accomplished this stupendous feat, everything was blackened out again. After several eons of peace, I heard voices.

"I think he will come out of it all right. There don't seem to be any bones broken. What do you think, lieutenant? I expect the doctor in a moment."

In a hazy way, I recognized Tom Kerr's voice, and at the same time felt a warm pressure upon a hand that was beginning to tingle painfully.

"How did it happen?" asked Lieutenant Rattler. "He acts as if he were hit in the spine by a ball."

"The Lord knows!" Kerr replied, sympathetically. "I was just going to play two more when I felt a terrible concussion, and looked up. It was as if a charge of dynamite had been exploded in the road. You could bury a horse and cart in the hole it made, and Huntress was found lying—" He stopped, as if he were embarrassed.

Then memory returned from out the dim haze, and with it the power to act. I tore my eyes open, and cried out: "Florence!—is she safe?"

The pressure on my hand redoubled.

"Easy, old man," cried Rattler, putting a strong hand on my shoulder.

"I guess we had better see if the doctor is here. Come on, lieutenant."

I did not think Tom Kerr so heartless. Why did they leave me alone? That healing pressure on my hand continued. It did not tingle so much now. Could it be possible? Was it—?

"Florence!" I whispered, "I want to see you. Are you safe?"

There was a swish of petticoats and a crackle of piqué, a sob and a little cry, and Florence lay in my arms, her cheek against mine, her hand patting my ear.

"Oh, darling," I whispered, "this is too much. Won't you forgive me?"

"Forgive you! Why, you saved my life, you hero you!"

"But I lost the match——"

"But, Billy"—she hesitated a little over my name, which she now tripped out for the first time—"didn't you win anything?"

"Florence!"—I held her as tightly as a blown-up man can—"do you mean it? I love you with my whole soul. I want you to be mine—mine—for always mine."

Florence generously accepted these maudlin sentiments.

"Oh, Billy dear, did you think I would be here simply because you saved my life? Any man would have done that!"

I don't think we talked for several minutes. There was so much going on, and I was feeling better every second.

"Now, Billy"—she sat up, trying to fix her hair—"I *must* breathe, and you must tell me what it was that really happened."

"And it's for always, darling?"

"Yes, Billy; it's for always!" We looked each other long and momentarily in the eyes.

"Then—" I began. There was a ladylike knock at the door. Kerr and Rattler came in, and found us holding hands like children. I must have blushed; but Florence looked them straight and triumphantly in the face. Ah, there's the woman of it!

"The doctor seems to be out. I telephoned twice," Kerr repeated.

"I don't think I need a doctor," I answered. Florence and I exchanged glances. Mine questioned and hers responded.

"How do you feel now?" Lieutenant Frank Rattler took a few steps nearer, and stood over me with a critical air. "I have had quite a little experience in cases of premature explosions. Do your ears ring?"

"Lieutenant Rattler," I must say that I gave the officer the most meaning look in my whole repertoire. "I want to shake your hand. I owe you the sweetest woman in the world. She has consented to become my wife."

Rattler and Kerr looked at us in amazement. But we who clasped hands understood. He had nearly killed me, and I had nearly killed her, and the secret of it was buried deep under the débris in that fatal road. As the brave lieutenant looked at me, his eyes dilating and contracting as the horror of it all and the joy of it all passed before his vision, I could not help repeating to myself, "You can't expect a charge of black powder to be lying loose on the golf-grounds, can you?"

He nearly tore the flesh off my knuckles in his mighty grip, as he said:

"I'll never forget it, old man, never!"

"But, Billy dear, *what* happened? There seems to be a little too much mystery around."

"Yes, confound it all, this is a pretty serious matter. I want to know *how* it happened!" The president of the club eyed me sternly.

Rattler shook his head, innocently.

"That cracker must have been filled with smokeless powder; that's the only explanation I can think of."

"Let's look upon it as a mysterious concatenation of unforeseen events, which I never, never shall regret."

"But, Billy, you *do* know," whispered Florence, bending down; "won't you tell me—when—when—we're married?"

"Perhaps," I murmured, happily.

A GAME OF CULINARY CHESS

By Charles M. Skinner

I DON'T know Bubbidge—don't want to. I didn't so much as know his name till I heard him addressed by an acquaintance who was on his way out. Yet we see each other across the same table in the same restaurant.

Pierre is our bond of dissonance, I suppose. I found Pierre first, so I think I have a right to him. He is my favorite waiter. After sampling the service of a dozen others in the Café Beaujolais, which, as you remember, is not far off the Avenue, and is not a table-d'hôte shop, I finally settled on Pierre as best of the lot, and, by George! I intend to keep him, no matter what that conspirator at the same table thinks about it.

The tables in the Beaujolais are made for only two. I never go up-stairs—at least, hardly ever, because the women are up there, and you can't smoke till after eight o'clock. Down-stairs, the diners are all men, and you can make a furnace of yourself as soon as your coffee comes on, and nobody cares. Indeed, the landlord would care if you didn't, because he sells most of the cigars.

Well, I have picked one of the tables at the side, where I can feel at ease after a busy day in court, where I am not often brushed by incomers and outgoers, and where I am far enough from the orchestra not to hear the fiddles scratch, which is an advantage in Schubert and Wagner. When it plays rag-time I bury myself in my paper, or work out problems in geometry on the back of the menu card, though I fear that some night I

shall break loose and smash the piano in the middle of "I'm de Honey Man ob 'Lasses-colored 'Liza." There is an electric light over my table—I've paid out money enough to call it mine, I hope—and it's altogether cozy and comfortable; rather, it was, till Bubbidge arrived—bad cess to him!

For he, though comparatively a newcomer, and therefore not entitled to the consideration that should be given to diners of more experience, has also picked out Pierre to wait upon him. That is all right. Pierre can wait on as many as he likes; only, why must this chap come to my table? Aren't there any others? Of course, in a crowded hour a customer has to sit where he can, and one doesn't mind being inconvenienced at such times; but I have seen this interloper avoid three empty tables in succession, steer straight for mine, plump into the chair opposite to me with a sigh of satisfaction and a look of malicious triumph, and heard him order onions. That's the way our duel began. There are several things in this world that I dislike, but only two that I hate: cigarettes and onions. And this stranger has the habit of both.

His first appearance was when I was finishing an uncommonly satisfying meal with raspberries and cream. What do you think he did? Ordered onion soup! And there I sat, trying to get the country fragrance out of the raspberries, while he gorged himself on the most plebeian fodder there is on the list, and the odor of it—phew!—went all over the premises, and seemed to curl in clouds about my head.

I have to say for Bubbidge—confound him!—that he is not offensive, except in his dietary. That is, he never swallows his knife, or loses his coffee-spoon down his throat, or chews with his mouth open, or tucks his napkin into his collar, or publicly digests the toothpicks, or perspires over his wine. He is well-dressed and quiet, and usually reads a paper or a magazine while he dines, just as I do, and smokes one of his pestiferous cigarettes, while I smoke my cigar. If he looks up, he seldom meets my eye, but gazes tranquilly at the other diners, or watches the smoke circles he blows at the ceiling; so I seldom look at him. It is an understanding between us that each shall be ignorant of the other's presence—at least, as ignorant as his pick of rations will permit. Physical violence is avoided, and the *vis-à-vis* is allowed to live.

I hope he doesn't imagine for an instant that I am going to allow him to drive me to some other table, or to monopolize Pierre. I shall be served by Pierre so long as he stays in the Beaujolais. He has *savoir faire*. He may be a count. It is worth the tip to be welcomed with his bow, his smile, his "Good evening, M'sieur Saxby," and his drawing forth my chair. He knows just how I want my salad dressed, and always undresses the chicken in the manner I prefer. He never fuddles around with spoons and ice-water and napkins and advice when I am eating, and he never runs away just as I have picked out what I want—an invariable habit of other waiters. I find him a safe guide in wines, when a new shipment has arrived, or when I want a change, for your average waiter will urge you to buy the most expensive, or one that is just beginning to spoil. Pierre drinks the heel-taps to better purpose. I like the fellow, and tip him regularly. For aught I know, Bubbidge likes him as well as I, and I fear that he seeks to undermine my influence by tipping him with larger coins than I can afford to give, till my practice is larger. Pierre is loyal, however.

Maybe he thinks that I shall succeed in dislodging the intruder, and then it must be my tips. Anyhow, I shall not give in. I defy the cigarettes, and am trying, through prayer, to keep resigned to the onions.

Now, this rascal Bubbidge saw at a glance that onions were distasteful to me. I made no secret of it; indeed, my nose turned up and my heart bowed down, in spite of me. I even put my handkerchief to my nose for a while, pretending, of course, to be polishing the end of it, for one cannot be pronounced and rude, even in one's hostilities, in a public place. He must spare the finer sensibilities of spectators; and, again, one must keep friends with the restaurant people, and not drive away custom by methods that are too obvious. But I countered, presently.

It happened, at that very first meeting, that I had ordered *pâté de foie gras*—a thing I seldom eat, but had desired through one of those sudden whims of appetite that come from reading a congested bill-of-fare. Immediately the dish was placed before me, I saw Bubbidge's eyebrows go up, and the upper lip purse out against his nose.

"Aha, villain! I have you on the hip!" quoth I to myself, that being symbolical for taking him by the nose. "The livers of artificially ripened geese shall henceforth be more familiar to my palate."

So I dallied over this item, holding bits of it on the end of the fork, and allowing that to remain carelessly extended in his direction, while I absorbed myself in the financial column. Once, I thought I heard him sniff; but, on looking up, he, too, was seen to be immersed in the news. He did not read a "yellow" paper, and he listened while they were playing Brahms. These facts made it less possible to come to blows with him. The contest for the possession of the table would be long, and it must be strategic. He had found one of my weak points, and I one of his.

Next evening, I was well under way

at my table when he entered and took his seat as complacently as if he belonged there. It may not be Pierre, altogether, that has drawn him to the place; it may be the light, or the distance from the orchestra, or the freedom from the drafts. Still, I shall not allow my mind to widen toward him. He has acted in a summary and unbecoming manner, and that precludes the possibility of friendship. He did not have any onions on the second evening, but he had bluefish. It was not a very new fish, it was broiled in considerable grease, and the denotements of its state were nearly as bad as onions. I immediately ordered *pâté de foie gras*—not that I wanted it, but as a punishment.

I have one or two tastes in dining that, I own, are a trifle bizarre, but they are harmless, and I can't help them any more than I can help my complexion. They are one reason why I prefer a table to myself, so that I may have what I wish without any comment or facial gymnastics from the neighbors. One of these likings is for mashed potatoes with English pickles. I said to myself, "I'm not going to be kept from my natural nutriment by this stranger;" so I ordered the potatoes and pickles, and went at them. As soon as I began to mix them I heard a gasp from Bubbidge. I had hurt his feelings again, eh? Struck him in another tender place? He didn't like the blend? No? Then he should have it, good and plenty. I lingered over the pickles and potatoes. I would almost eat sugar on oysters. I may train myself to do that yet, if it will displease Bubbidge.

You can't have game till it is a little "high." Some people like it very high, but that's a mistake, for it is too tender, then. Bubbidge doesn't like it high. Hence, I shall have venison, or hare, or grouse, as often as the emoluments of a limited law practice permit. When I have them, Bubbidge retaliates with onions—not only boiled and fried onions, but raw ones, swimming in vinegar and smelling to heaven. I place the platter of game as near to his

side as possible, and consume my meat deliberately.

Don't tell me that a man of moral sense will sweeten his claret! Well, Bubbidge does, and I have to sit there and see him do it. And don't tell me that a man of moral sense can object to combining cauliflower and German pancake, as I am accustomed to do, and Bubbidge has to sit there and see me do it, and I'm good and elaborate about it, too. By watching the various tokens of disapproval on Bubbidge's part—and he watches just as slyly for mine—I have learned to know his dislikes and to feed his nostrils with them. He will eat onions, will he? Then, game for him. He will eat anchovies, will he? Then, corned beef and cabbage for him. He likes salt mackerel, does he? Then he shall writhe before stewed tomatoes.

But my best discovery was made when I reached the cheese. I hold that a taste for fine European cheeses is a part of the higher education. After your salad, a bit of roquefort, gorgonzola, stilton, port du salut or brie is compulsory. I am not sure that it is not required by manners, to say nothing of the esthetics of dining. But I distinctly saw Bubbidge wince when they brought on some camembert one night. It was just a wee bit along in years, I confess, and Pierre, by the merest accident, had set it down before him. The citizen always begins his complaint to an offending editor by stating, "I have had my attention called to an article," etc. Well, Bubbidge had his attention called to this article, but not by any outsider. He discovered it.

"I don't want that!" he exclaimed, in alarm.

Pierre begged his pardon, and brought the plate around to my side. I spent an unusual time stripping off the bark and allowing the rich contents to flow over the plate, because I saw how it distressed Bubbidge, and how he tried to hide behind his paper.

But it was my turn to be frightened when he reached for his cigarette-case, and set one of his rolls of

punk on fire. It was the more distressing because he smoked quite fluently, throwing clouds of sorrow all around him, and seeming to breathe them eagerly. In fact, he lighted a second cigarette before I was through, and I heard him heave a sigh of relief—now, why is it that you never throw a sigh, but must always heave it?—when Pierre came to remove the débris, and I lighted my cigar, and settled to the demi-tasse and the paper.

I have felt myself justified in taking severe measures with Bubbidge. I have asked Pierre which he regarded as the very oldest and softest cheese on the bill, and he has brought it, with a subdued keep-it-at-arm's-length expression that was rather pathetic, too. Once or twice it was impossible, and I had to send it back, but its presence on the table for even a minute, while I cut into it and explored under its rind, has had such an effect on Bubbidge that I could almost hear his heart beat.

The other night he had evidently planned a coup. I could see it in his eye as he sat down, gave a loud and challenging "Ahem!" and summoned Pierre with his forefinger.

"So, so!" thought I. "If you are for playing the game to its limit, have with you!"

The game opened with the Bubbidge gambit; the pushing forward of a pawn—a finger-bowl, left by a previous patron—nearly to my side of the table. This opened a way to move his queen, and he moved it—onion soup. I, meanwhile, had met the finger-bowl with a cocktail-glass in which lingered the fragrance of a martini, for I had noticed that he disapproved of appetizers, and I was only sorry that it wasn't one of those chloride-of-lime cocktails they tell about in the shows. When his onions came on, I retaliated with goose-liver pâté. It wasn't a very good opening, but something had to be done, quick. There was some sparring, with napkins, toothpick-holders, match-boxes and the caster for pawns, as we studied the game, but no open or aggressive play till the board was

somewhat clearer, when there was a rapid and brilliant attack, on his part, of anchovies, fried salt mackerel, stewed kidneys—food for felons—fried onions, onion salad, custard pie, sugared claret and cigarettes. What do you think of a man who will do a thing like that?

My play was to follow the *pâté de foie gras* with venison, potatoes and pickles, boiled cabbage, stewed tomatoes, cauliflower with pancake, and—now I put my queen into play—the cheese. I knew that I as good as had him when I was free to move the cheese, because it was particularly fragrant old pont l'évêque they had cut into that night. On the whole, I guess it was a good thing for the landlord that the Board of Health didn't happen to be passing when they did it. Indeed, it almost disquieted me; but, by spreading it pretty thin over the crackers, I found that I could stand it, and, though I almost hated to do it, I ordered a second portion.

This was the master move. I could have shouted "Checkmate!" For Bubbidge, who had been pretending to get ready to drink his coffee, and had been keeping it for an unconscionable time under his nose, while he read his paper with a severe brow, turned pale as he heard me give the second order. He swallowed his coffee, gave three swift puffs at his cigarette, glanced at his watch, to see whether it was time to fill some engagement he hadn't made, and fled, trying to make it look as if he were not in a hurry, and were moving with nonchalance.

I was in hopes that I had finished him, and that he had resigned all pretension to my table. But no; he was there next evening, with a carnation in his button-hole, looking as serene and absent-minded as if he had come into the place for the first time, yet quaking in his heart over the prospect of more cheese, and you may be sure I ordered it. I see that he expects to stay. I wonder how long we can keep this up without being conscious of each other. And I

wonder if Pierre has "caught on" to the game of culinary chess that progresses under his nose; but he gives no sign, and serves both of us with impartial promptness and civility.

The contest has been on for two weeks, and I shall play my part in it to the bitter end. I force Pierre to do scout duty, and keep me posted as to arrivals of cheese, particularly of the violent species. I seriously think of learning to eat limburger, provided they will let it into the Beaujolais. And when Bubbidge has been

particularly cool and scornful, I have meditated a darker deed, namely, finding where he lives, and dropping a pound of roquefort rinds into his area, or hurling a gorgonzola bomb through his window. Yet, I am loath to do this, for, while I execrate his taste, I admire his persistency and courage. Sometimes, I have caught him twinkling, and have suspected relenting. The awful thought has come into my head that this fight may end in my liking him. But he's got to give up onions before I'll tell him so!



AT NIGHT

WHEN the deep night wraps all the world around,
 And little troops of stars watch in the sky,
 My thoughts, O Love, with thine are firmly bound,
 And sweetest dreams, like stars, come silently.
 Lo! when the moon walks forth without a sound,
 And every star to her lifts up its eye,
 My thoughts turn toward the distance where thou art,
 And, like a moon, thou fillest my sad heart.

The little stars gaze long, but cannot speak;
 So, voiceless, follows thee my every thought,
 Or burns more brightly thy dear face to seek
 If folded clouds thy shining light have caught.
 And, oh, when silent morn begins to break,
 And the pale moon fades in the light God wrought,
 The little stars come down like dew at dawn;
 So break my thoughts in tears when thou art gone!

HOWARD WYDMAN.



A TRIFLE PARADOXICAL

"HE is extremely popular because he is habitually short in his accounts."
 "Why——?"
 "Oh, he is a great funny-story teller."

THE LAST LOVER

IT is so late! Down all our days are set
 November and the snows;
 Yet now, when we are ready to forget,
 For both has blown a rose.

Right well we know nor you nor I can make
 A blaze of one lean spark;
 And it were all in vain for us to take
 This candle to the dark.

Now what, in truth, the fitting word to say,
 And what the proper fate,
 For growing red on a November day,
 For being a rose so late?

Oh, must we pluck it, sweet though come to dust,
 A moment hold it fast;
 Or leave it to the gathering of the gust;
 A rose, but at the last!

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.



EXCUSING HIMSELF

ANGRY FATHER—Look here, young man, it takes you longer and longer
 to say good night to my daughter.

THE YOUNG MAN—Well, sir, the nights are longer than they were.



CLEVERTON—I hear McPlunge has left Wall street.

DASHAWAY—Yes, it was too tame. He wanted more excitement.

CLEVERTON—What is he doing?

DASHAWAY—Oh, he got acquainted with some New York society women,
 and he's playing bridge with them.

THE GHOST OF THE OLD ADAM

By Julian Hawthorne

THE ladies having withdrawn: "Come, gentlemen," said our host—we were dining with Tom Crashaw, formerly American minister to Russia—"come, boys—if at this genial moment I may call you so—let us believe ourselves forty years younger! And, Motherwell, the decanter stays with you!"

Bishop Motherwell's placid visage, after lighting up with a smile, became pensive, and he sighed as he poured out another thimbleful of that exquisite Madeira, and passed the bottle on to me. He sipped the wine, and sighed again. "What an imagination you have, Crashaw, and what audacity!"

"Forty years!" echoed John Raleigh, from the other side of the table. "*Eheu fugaces!* Prithee, good friend, an thou lovest me—that flask of garnered sunshine! Forty years ago I weighed but half what I do now. '*Infandum, Crashaw, jubes renovare*——'"

"Not '*dolorem*,'" I interrupted; "except in the 'Locksley Hall' application. Happiness is the only angel we ever entertain *una vares*. When you were an undergraduate, you thought that to be the author of 'The Evolution of Race' would be heaven; and you took your one hundred and forty pounds as a matter of course; now that you have become that distinguished personage, and have added to yourself one hundred and forty pounds more, you——"

"Your moral is something musty," grunted the great author; "but—confound Crashaw just the same!"

Crashaw laughed in his deep chest. "The confusion should be yours," he retorted. "I didn't ask you to go back forty years, but merely to imagine

yourselves forty years younger; not to revert to what we actually were, but, remaining in other respects what we are, to achieve youth once more."

Raleigh swallowed his wine slowly. "It's all a question of how much of the Madeira you have left!" said he.

Crashaw happened to be looking at me. I saw a strange expression peep for a moment out of his eyes, and then withdraw again. He remarked, half to himself:

"That reminds me of a story."

"The Elixir of Life!" murmured the bishop, following a thought of his own. "The Church should be willing to pay a high price for that!"

Crashaw lifted his strong brows. "How can earthly immortality concern the Church?" he inquired.

"Not the immortality in and for itself," replied Motherwell, in his smooth, mellow tones, "but the chance to benefit in the strength of youth by the experience of age. With such an opportunity, most of us, methinks, would die saints!"

"Why, don't all boys and girls get the benefit of their elders' experience?" I put in; "and do *they* benefit by it? Raleigh ought to know; he's been a professor in the university."

Raleigh scratched his double chin. "We can't tell how much worse they'd have been without it, you know," said he, guardedly.

"Nor how much better!" Crashaw added, grimly.

"But," interposed the bishop, smiling, "to be wise or good on the strength of another's experience, and to be wise or good on your own—are they not two very different things?"

Crashaw squared his shoulders, and lifted his head with the lion-like movement that was characteristic of him. Said he, "My dear fellow, old age is the only thing that keeps most of us from dying—not saints, as you seem to fancy, but—devils! If Satan could have his way, depend upon it, he'd keep us all our lives at, say, twenty-eight or thirty. Suppose, for example, that Jack Raleigh, when he was an undergraduate of twenty, had robbed a widow and cut her throat. And suppose that to-day, at sixty, with an international reputation for genius and learning, he feels repentant for that deed. And suppose, finally, that the glass of Madeira he has just swallowed were the Elixir of Youth. It has restored his twenty years; and to-morrow, or to-night, if possible, you will see him go forth and murder his widow over again!"

"Motherwell is right—you're too imaginative," grunted Raleigh. "I'd never dare go near enough to a widow to murder her; and as for your theory, read Wordsworth's 'Ode.'"

"I don't mean to be cynical; and I admit that we may trail clouds of glory occasionally," replied Crashaw. "But I also believe in sin, both original and hereditary; and that quality which we call the fire of youth, in warming us up generally, naturally finds more fuel of the sinister sort than of the angelic. That's all."

"Not quite all, is it?" said I. "It seems to me you imply also something fatalistic."

Motherwell, who, for all his amenity, was very keen-sighted, had been looking hard at Crashaw. "Unless I mistake," he now remarked, "our host has something more than theory to support him in this case. Eh, doubtful Thomas?"

Crashaw folded his powerful arms across his chest, and looked from one to another of our faces. "I'll make my confession, if you care to hear it," he said. "There's another bottle on the sideboard, which has been cooled a long age in the deep-delved cellar, if the present one gives out. Cast your votes!"

"The story, by acclamation," said Motherwell; Raleigh and I murmuring harmonious. And, after a few moments' consideration, Crashaw spoke, in his deep tones, to this effect:

"The thing occurred more than forty years ago; I was a lad then, but I happened to be acquainted with all three of the chief actors in it. You have probably heard, all of you, of Winthrop Mackworth Glynn, who was famous in his day, chiefly because of the three novels he wrote having an occult motive; that sort of thing has been worked to death since then; but there's a quality in Glynn's books that, to my mind, has never been rivaled in that kind of literature. My judgment may be influenced by my personal knowledge of the man; he was much more remarkable than his books. Externally, he was merely an accomplished man of the world; but on occasion he would raise the veil a little, and you had a glimpse of the man of strange experiences and knowledges—the adept. He was tall, hollow-cheeked, with a magnificent head and cavernous, glowing eyes. He had traveled a great deal, and seemed to have plenty of money. He was anything but aggressive or demonstrative; but, wherever he was, he was the most impressive person there; you felt him, as the needle feels the magnet. He was not an American by birth, though he lived here about ten years, chiefly in Baltimore. I have heard him mentioned, since then, in London, St. Petersburg, Calcutta; but if he were living now, he would be more than a century old—not that I would be surprised at that!

"At the time I speak of, there was a wealthy old lady living in Baltimore, known as the Countess Eustacia Bellosguardo, of Baltimore stock, who had married an Italian count, and had been many years a widow. There was a queer story about that, which I may refer to later. When I saw her she was near seventy; you could see she'd been handsome; but she was devout, and much addicted to charities. She

dressed in semi-monastic costume—mauve and black, with a long gold chain round her neck, carrying a heavy gold cross. Her voice and manner were soft and caressing; but there was a sort of nervousness in her—a subdued tremor. She often had the air of seeing terrifying things invisible to others.

"She was very fond of a young half-cousin of hers, a boy of fourteen, who was, it was said, to be her heir. I knew this young fellow well; a well-grown, lusty lad; but what attracted the countess was his religious proclivity. He was a saint in roundabouts, and quite sincere in it, too; and he had a great gift of the gab in discoursing on religious matters. He used to address revival meetings under the patronage of the countess, and he made plenty of converts. The boy apostle, he was called."

"How did he finally turn out?" asked Raleigh.

Crashaw smiled. "He rose above mediocrity, but not in the apostolic line. I suppose you've met with such transient phenomena, Motherwell?"

"They have their use in the Providential scheme," said the bishop, placidly, "like the orchid and the morning-glory. All things mortal are transient; the end we know not!"

"Go ahead, Crashaw!" said I.

"The countess's religiosity," the ex-minister continued, "had not been determined in any special direction as regarded dogma; and she was anxious to meet Glynn, whose knowledge of the faiths of the East might help her to the true balm of Gilead. The interview came off in the old Colonial drawing-room in her house; solemn old portraits on the walls, furniture of a dignified, rigid, graceful aspect; a delicate, faded tone over everything, and an odor of lavender and incense mingled. The countess and the boy apostle awaited the visitor alone; she, in her monastic robe, was pacing up and down, clasping the golden cross tightly in her thin hands; and the boy was examining with great interest, by the light of the candles in the candelabra—

the countess would permit no other than candle-light—the painted miniatures in an old illuminated missal. It was his substitute, at that time, for 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"Whence this wealth of detail?" demanded Raleigh.

"Oh, I got it from the boy. Presently, the guest arrived. He had on a long-skirted bodycoat, with a cape; he removed it, and showed himself in black, with soft lawn at his throat and lace ruffles at his wrists. It was quite eighteenth century, altogether. After some opening amenities, the countess brought the conversation to the doctrines of repentance and salvation. The boy took part in the dialogue, not aggressively, but with the enthusiasm of his age and condition; but his eloquence, except so far as actual quotations from Holy Writ entered into it, was, of course, mainly emotional and sentimental. The countess revealed her misgiving lest the ecstatic vision, which many, who believe themselves regenerate, adduce in proof of their election, may be illusive; how, at any rate, could one be assured of its genuineness? What was the Oriental view of this matter?"

"Presently, Glynn began to speak. There was an extraordinary fascination about this man. With the candle-light throwing soft shadows and lights on his striking face, with its subtle, but impressive, play of expression, with his deep-set eyes radiating light and energy, and with his long, graceful hands moving in expository and punctuating gestures, he might have sat for the portrait of a wizard weaving his spells."

"Hypnotization?" interjected Raleigh, who was smoking a cigar in long, regular whiffs.

"Braid's investigation had not at that time become public," replied Crashaw. "How much Buddhist philosophy entered into Glynn's discourse I can't say; but the gist of it was to diminish the moral importance of the individual, and to regard him as a unit reflecting the organic and involuntary experiences of mankind universal. His sins, repentance and sal-

vation or damnation, though appearing to him personal, were in truth inevitable incidents of the larger scheme. While he was speaking, the eyes of his two auditors became gradually fixed upon the great ruby which he wore in a ring on his left hand. It caught the light from the candles; and as his hand moved, this point of crimson fire seemed to describe mystic figures against the gloom of the background. The boy stared, open-mouthed; the countess sat clutching her cross till her knuckles whitened."

"Fine imaginative detail!" murmured the bishop. "But the argument seems hardly——"

"The culmination was less hackneyed," rejoined Crashaw. "Time (he said) was a veil designed to hide from us our essential impotence. We fancy, to-day, that we are more, less, wiser or weaker, than yesterday; but all the while there is no yesterday or to-day; but we are being led and molded, used or wasted, according to the needs of the universal, impersonal economy. Dispel the illusion—remove the imaginary veil—and we would recognize that all there really is of us is the motive-power which we term evil—the love of self. We conjure up phantoms, which we name fear, desire, despair, hope; and these induce us to act against our actual nature; but let their influence be undone, and we would revert instantly to our ruling principle. We are all devils at heart, lured by self-deceptions to work, on the whole, for the good of the race at large."

The bishop uplifted protesting hands, but Raleigh broke out: "No shop-talk, Motherwell, I entreat you! The ladies have withdrawn, and this yarn begins to interest me."

"The boy and the countess were as much scandalized as the bishop," said Crashaw. "The boy saw his apostolic career slipping away from him; and the countess resented the expenditure of incalculable wax candles and repentance. Now, there was a tray containing a flask of wine and glasses on the table at hand, which a servant had brought in at the opening of the dis-

cussion. Glynn rose, and poured out some of the liquor into the glasses—it was capital Madeira, gentlemen!—"With your permission, madame," he then said to the countess, "I will show you an experiment which I learned in the East. Practical illustration is worth all the syllogisms in the world. He drew the ruby from his finger, and dipped the flaming stone into the wine in two of the glasses; it appeared to the observers that a slight ebullition occurred in the clear liquid, as if it had been a kind of champagne. It subsided in a few moments, and Glynn then handed the two glasses to the countess and to the boy. 'You shall become initiates and see clearly,' said he; 'I pledge you!' and he raised the third glass to his lips. They all drank.

"You will understand, gentlemen," Crashaw continued, "that, inasmuch as the episode I am trying to describe to you was largely subjective, you must attempt to throw yourselves into the personality of the actors in it—as I have done whenever I have thought it over during the past forty years. In other words, you must, to a certain extent, infer the cause from the results. I'll explain later how I could do this with some probability of accuracy.

"The countess leaned back in her chair, breathing quickly; a feeling like the finest spirit of fire was running through her veins and gathering force in her heart. Presently, she started to her feet, and made a gesture as if throwing off from her an encumbering cloak, which seemed to her to be woven of the decades of years that had passed since the prime of her youth. She now stood, a beautiful young woman of twenty, with overmastering passions in her soul. On the bed in an adjoining chamber, she knew, was lying a man who would never rise from it, to whom she owed the deepest obligation, which she repudiated and defied. With her eyes upon the door, she stepped stealthily hither and thither, seeming to gather up precious objects—jewels and money, which she thrust into a bag on her arm. But there was something

which she still sought with painful eagerness, opening drawers, lifting up papers, sifting the leaves of books. In the midst of this search, she was suddenly aware of the presence before her of a young man a few years older than herself, of striking beauty of the Italian type, clad for a journey. She suppressed a scream; then threw herself into his open arms, and kissed him vehemently. Glynn, looking on apart, saw an old woman of sixty-six embracing a boy of fourteen! But glamour was upon the senses of the boy also, and he seemed, at double his actual years, to be consummating an intrigue which had for months held him in its clutches."

"Are we to understand," I interrupted, at this point, "that the boy and the countess both imagined themselves to be taking part in an identical complication of events?"

"No," said Crashaw. "The boy had been carried forward in time to something which awaited him in the future; the countess had reverted to an incident which had actually occurred in her youth. But each of them used the other as the fellow-actor, respectively, in his and her drama, the details of which had enough outward coincidence to enable them to carry out the scene in common. Their prepossession would naturally cause them to ignore the misfits."

"Yes—yes!" said Raleigh, who had laid aside his cigar, and was leaning forward on his elbows. "The positive overriding the negative—go on!"

"There was some hurried dialogue between the pair," Crashaw resumed. "They were agitated and somewhat incoherent. The woman, between feverish endearments and ejaculations of apprehension, kept questioning him about a certain deed or document which, it seemed, was of vital importance to them. Her companion declaimed in a tone which, except for one under great stress of emotion and excitement, would have appeared extravagant, about his passion for her, about defying man and God for her sake, about all being ready for their

flight, and about the felicity in store for them. She spoke of a certain medicine—she referred to it in a manner so ominous and ambiguous as might well have aroused suspicions as to the integrity of its medicinal properties—which her lover had entrusted to her to administer to the man in the next room. 'I put it in his coffee, as you told me,' she whispered. 'He drank it to the last drop, and thanked me, and fell asleep; he has not stirred since!' and she gave a terrible look, half-exultant, half-appalled. Then she said, 'I remember now!—that deed is under his pillow; he had just signed it; I must get it; wait here for me!'

"She turned away, and, walking on tip-toe, went through the motions of softly opening a closed door, though no door was there; she stole forward, and seemed to stand beside a bed, looking down on the occupant. She slowly and fearfully put out a hand, and touched an invisible brow, instantly withdrawing it with a smothered cry. 'It's done!' she murmured to herself; 'but no one will ever discover—it has left no trace—these Italians know the secret!' Then, still as if fearing to rouse him, she cautiously insinuated her hand under the imaginary pillow, and drew forth the coveted deed—empty air to all eyes but hers. She folded it up hurriedly, and thrust it into the bosom of her dress. She now pressed her hands over her eyes, turned, and hurried blindly back and threw herself, with a hysterical cry, into her lover's arms.

"He, meanwhile, had been pacing restlessly up and down, muttering to himself something about the curse of the Church, of love justifying all things, and much more unintelligible stuff. But, his mistress having returned, they told each other that they must be off at once, and were going toward the door, when Glynn stepped forward, and intercepted them. He waved his hands before their faces, then clapped them loudly together, and the boy apostle and the aged countess appeared to each other and to themselves in their proper persons once more!

"Glynn said to them, 'You have had a dream, my friends, from which I awakened you when it had gone far enough. You, my dear countess, feeling once again the ardor of your twenty years, reenacted the scene which then occurred, from which you have since tried to absolve yourself by what you imagined to be repentance and its works. You, my young friend, have turned a page of the future, now some twelve years ahead of you, and have seen what nature and heredity—unless forearmed by this forewarning—will make of your present religious enthusiasms. I have merely let down the bars of time, and, by restoring to you in one case the feeling of youth which you had lost, and, in the other case, advancing you to the manhood which you will attain, have revealed to you the inevitableness of Being, and the impotence of Existence. There is no such thing as self-made good or evil. What you do only seems to be voluntary and personal; in reality, it is the effect, for good or ill, of the unconscious spiritual condition of the race, manifesting itself through you.

"'Nevertheless,' he added, turning to the boy, 'it is sometimes possible, by prevision and preparation, to abstain from committing some particular sin; and therefore it may serve you well to remember this experience. As for you, madame, you have less cause than before to despair of your salvation; for The Old Adam abides with you, as with all of us; it is vain to deny him; but, on the other hand, he will not be the arbiter of your fate beyond the grave. On that score, you may rest assured that the ultimate destiny of all human creatures will be far better than they can possibly deserve!'"

Crashaw had uttered the last speech with a dramatic solemnity and power that affected us all. He now reverted to his usual manner. "I have only to add, gentlemen, that you may rely upon the truth of the occurrence which I have told you, so far as it belongs to the actual sphere of things. And I will also clear up whatever obscurity attaches to the suggestions contained in

this composite drama. The countess—she died soon after the meeting with Glynn, and I have disguised her name, so that the truth can do her no harm—the countess, when about twenty years of age, was betrothed to a rich man, a retired officer of our army, much older than herself, and infirm in health. Very shortly before the time set for their marriage, he made a deed, settling upon her his estate. At just about that juncture, he was taken acutely ill, and the girl installed herself as his nurse. But it appeared that she had been playing false all along; for, on the very night of his death, she eloped with the Italian nobleman who afterward became her husband. The medical experts of those days were somewhat less sagacious than they are now, or question as to the cause of the old man's death might have arisen; as it was, he was understood to have died from the natural decay of old age, hastened by some minor inflammation of the viscera. No opposition was made to the bequest being enjoyed by the countess, who lived abroad until long after the count's death, and till a new generation had sprung up in her former home.

"The case of the boy was a little different. For several years he continued his religious activity, and studied to enter holy orders; but, on one pretext or another, his installation was postponed; and when he was twenty-five or six years of age, being then in France, he fell violently in love with a young lady, the younger daughter of a great family, who was destined to a convent. He contrived to have some interviews with her; she repelled him, but in such a way that he did not lose hope, but persevered, until finally she consented to go off with him, though she had already taken the preliminary monastic vows.

"That night, before starting for the rendezvous, while tearing up some letters and other papers, he came across a card with a black border, on which were written the words, '*Remember! Winthrop Mackworth Glynn.*' How it happened to be there he never discov-

ered; very likely he had written it him-
self at the time of their meeting, and
had forgotten it. At any rate, it now
recalled the episode to him, with such
effect that he refrained from keeping
his appointment; and the poor girl,
after waiting for him for a while, lost
heart, and returned to her sacred alle-
giance.—Motherwell, the bottle, as
usual, stays with you!"

The auditors of this singular story
grunted inarticulately, each in his own
key, and remained for some time star-
ing at nothing in particular, thinking it
over.

"Did you ever tell this before now?"
inquired the bishop, at length.

Crashaw shook his head, smilingly.

"I'm glad of it," rejoined Mother-
well; "for, while it is undeniably pow-
erful and strange, I must pronounce it,
in point of ethics, morals and religion,
utterly heretical and objectionable. Of
course, there are things, in both spir-
itual and material worlds, that we do
not yet comprehend; but better sup-
press consideration of them altogether
than hazard such attempts as this at
interpreting them."

"There's the man you should cau-
tion," said Crashaw, indicating me.
"As a professional scribe, he's much
more apt to reproduce the episode than
I am."

"You told it better than I could," I

replied; "I was struck, on my profes-
sional side, with the minuteness and
vividness of some of your descriptions.
It isn't often that a person retains for
over forty years so exact a recollection
of an event heard of at second hand.
By the way, would it be indiscreet to
ask the name of the boy apostle? I
believe you omitted to mention it."

Raleigh looked across at me, and
lifted his eyebrows significantly.

"Very indiscreet, indeed, I fancy!"
he said, nodding his big head between
the words.

Crashaw gave a dry laugh. "The
boy was the father of the man who
still lives; but inasmuch as his beset-
ting and predestined sin was happily
averted, I don't think he would have
any objection to confiding his identity
to you—that is, if you hadn't already
guessed it! Yes, gentlemen, he sits be-
fore you; and now begs to suggest that,
if you have exhausted the resources of
this room, we should all seek a higher
refreshment in the company of the
ladies."

"And there abjure all faith in the
ghost of the old Adam!" added the
bishop, devoutly. "To the ladies,
friends, God bless them!—to the Eves
of the living present, who shall yet
guide us back to Eden!"

"Capital Madeira, eh, bishop?" said
Raleigh, with an unregenerate smile;
and so we went out.



FLEETING FAME

CASTLETON—Is the man you're going to dine with to-night at all prominent?
CLUBBERLY—Oh, no—merely the author of the best-selling book of last week.



THE FATHER—My boy, keep away from actresses. It might prove very
embarrassing.

THE SON—But, governor, I don't go with the same set you do.

HOW SHE WOULD SETTLE IT

"I TELL you, there is a wonderful lot of interest in the coming yacht race," remarked Mr. Cumso, as he laid down his newspaper, after devouring a few columns of information concerning *Reliance* and *Shamrock*.

"What are they going to race for?" asked Mrs. Cumso.

"For the *America's Cup*."

"What's that?"

"Why, my dear, it's odd you don't know what the *America's Cup* is! I've talked about it every time there's been an international yacht race for the past ten years or more. The *America's Cup*, my dear, is a trophy won by the yacht *America*, in English waters, ever so many years ago. Queen Victoria watched the finish of the race from a ship, and as soon as a yacht came in sight around the edge of an island, she asked, eagerly:

"What boat is it?"

"The *America*, your Majesty," replied one of the gentlemen-in-waiting.

"And what yacht is second?" the queen then inquired.

"Your Majesty," was the reply, "there is no second."

"Since then, the English people have spent an awful amount of money building yachts to compete with American boats, in the hope of getting that Cup back again, but all in vain. Yankee skill in boat-building and in navigation has always beaten the very best that Johnny Bull could do, and the Cup is still on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. I tell you, it makes a fellow take a great deal of genuine pride in his country when he thinks of the long and successful defense of that Cup."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Cumso, thoughtfully, after listening to her husband, "that the Yankees have spent a great deal of money, too."

"Of course they have. It takes oodles of cash to build and sail yachts."

"How much is the Cup worth?"

"Intrinsically, do you mean?"

"Yes; I mean how much would it cost to duplicate it?"

"Oh, I don't know, exactly, but I suppose a Cup like it could be made for about one hundred and fifty dollars. It's silver, you know."

"It was made quite a number of years ago, I think you said?"

"Yes."

"If a yachting cup were to be made now, I suppose it would be a more beautiful one—more modern in style, perhaps?"

"Perhaps, my dear; but I don't see what you are driving at."

"Don't you? Well, do you know how I would settle this whole business, if I were the Englishmen?"

"No; how would you settle it?"

"Well, instead of spending so much money for yachts, and coming over here year after year in the effort to get that old Cup, I'd take that one hundred and fifty dollars and get a nicer cup, and keep it in England."

Then Mrs. Cumso resumed her fancy work with the air of one who has brought a particularly difficult problem to a very satisfactory solution.

WILLIAM HENRY SIVITER.

CLARA—That complexion specialist told me that I must wear a face-mask.
MAUD—Night or day?

MORTE DE GUINEVERE

AN EPIC OF MODERNITY

By Fletcher Cowan

ALL day long the noise of battle rolled
Down in the basement of the department-store;
For it was Friday, consecrate as bargain-day.

There, in the elbow-crush, moved Guinevere,
Looking for challis quoted three per yard,
Batiste at six and organdie at nine,
And other stuffs reduced as advertised.
The shirt-waist counter sore besieged was
By skirted vultures, wild with taste of blood,
Haunting the textile heaps as mounds of carrion.
And men were there—great, strong and lusty men—
Men who in Greece, years thousand-fold before,
Would in the Jason or Ulysses set have been;
There, congregate, they were like nosing wolves,
Snooping the tit-bits in a special drive
Of pink-hued outing shirts, with bosom stripes
That leaped from earth to zenith with a yell
Like bedroom wall-paper.

As in a daze,
Moved Guinevere, transported by the scene;
For, never, in the history of her life—
Young, though a housewife tried, at twenty-nine—
Had she seen offered, at such cutthroat cost,
So many things she erst had no desire for.
But, now, this truck, thrown at her with the vaunt
Of slaughter sacrifice, for but "this day"—
She seized the vantage of each fraction drop,
And, flinging 'side necessity's still voice,
Bought everything in sight!
Bust-measured, as she was, at thirty-two,
She bought, a-plenty, garments forty span.
She had a neck which on occasion could—
Piano tintinnabulation given—
Sopranify the "Holy City" in
A style that made of it another place;
Which cervix taped at just the twelve-and-half.
Yet, corraled she two dozen collars, which—
At placard price of five per—measured full
A half-and-seventeen, with flare revers
To give the Adam's-apple sliding room.

She personally needed hose, and yet
 She bought babes' toe-mits, though without a child—
 A fond investment in futurity;
 And purchased carpet-tacks she needed not,
 To make the floor seem home-like to the man,
 Some midnight in his pacings with the babe.
 Egg-beaters and some colored ribbon, then,
 Preëmpted she together with tooth-wash;
 A dictionary and a bar of soap;
 Colognes and a potato-masher, then
 An ice-box, with much tin-ware, garnered in
 Amid the cries of "Boy!" and "Cash!" "Cash!" "Cash!"

So, all day long, the noise of battle rolled
 Down in the basement of the department-store;
 When, suddenly, pierced through the choking air,
 And rose above the arc-light's sizzling spit,
 And topped, reverberant, th' orchestrion's blare,
 A voice which, from its intone, seemed that of
 A floor-walk god, beperked with brief authority.
 "Ladies and gents!" it cried, "we beg to say
 This house cannot deliver goods to-day.
 The dry-goods charioteers have gone on strike;
 And what you purchase now's not guaranteed
 To be delivered till the muss is ended.
 Goods may be taken with you, if you wish:
 Cash—for pianos, stoves, all heavy-weights,
 Which might impede your progress on the cars—
 Will briskly be refunded at the desk."

Then swept a great revulsion o'er the mass,
 Confined in that stifling bargain crypt,
 Like unto that historic tidal lash
 When Israel strove to rush the carmine sea.
 First, in the driving crush, moved Guinevere,
 Now almost faint from stress and lack of food;
 For she'd forsaken breakfast, home, that morn,
 And nothing since had passed her ashen lips
 But sample grits drawn from the health-food shrines.

Soon had the tide relentless forced her on
 And borne her panting to th' adjustment desk;
 Where, while some took back cash, there others were
 Who clamored for the goods, with direful fear
 That ne'er again on earth would they obtain
 Such bargains at such sacrifice; and of
 This latter mind was Guinevere.
 The ice-box she made up her mind to leave
 Until the strike was over; but the rest—
 Shirt-waists and ribbons, soap and picture-wire,
 The Webster's Unabridged, Virginia ham,
 The potted cheese and can of chloride o' lime,
 The gas-stove, smooth-iron and the mandolin,
 The parrot-cage and all the tin-ware pack,
 Belonging to the light-weight class, she took—
 Then turned, to fight her way back through the crowd!

No camel moving o'er Sahara's waste
 Was e'er so full be-panniered, and there rose,
 Out from the throats of the on-pushing host,
 A wail of protest 'gainst her willowed form.
 But, armored with her tin-ware, Guinevere,
 Like Joan of Arc, quaked not before the foe,
 And, banged and battered, moved she in the teeth
 Of the calamity that was inevitable;
 When, as she'd fain precipitate the end,
 Just 'fore the human maelstrom locked her in,
 She made a sudden tangent break toward
 A place where she saw, marked at ninety-nine,
 A sale of step-ladders.
 Home, had she a canary lofted high,
 To save it from the predatory cat;
 And when she saw those ladders, Guinevere
 Made up her mind to buy one, as a stair
 On which to pass up cuttle-bone and seed
 Unto the said bird hung high from said cat.
 She grabbed a ladder, and a dollar gave
 And then held steadfast, panting for her change;
 When, rose again a shout of mortal woe
 As Guinevere, with ladder lengthwise spread,
 Held back the howling phalanx.
 "The spiteful snip!" the women plainly cried.
 "Hey! Mow that woman down!" shrieked out the men.
 But Guinevere stood firmly, and replied:
 "I'll wait here till I get my one cent change."

Then rose that shout again, to which rejoined
 The pale-faced Guinevere, with tilted hat,
 While clinging to her tin-ware and the stair,
 "I'll wait here till I get my one cent change!"
 "Cash!" "Cash!" "Boy!" "Boy!" squeaked, in crescendo pipe,
 The call of weakling sales-girls, till a man
 Yelled out with foam-flecked lips: "Will some one GIVE
 That living job-lot, front, her one cent change!"
 A myriad dexter fingers tried to seek,
 With one accord, each pocket treasury;
 But locked so tightly was the knitted throng
 That no one could move elbow, whilst 'bove all,
 One voice reiterate, still defiant, cried:
 "That sales-card said the thing was ninety-nine;
 I'll wait here till I get my one cent change!"

In Kansas they have cyclones, so 'tis said,
 That waft the very house-roofs from one's head,
 As, in the Orient they have seismic spasms
 That topple temples from the crown to root,
 And make the noblest fabrics of the world
 Resemble thirty centimes.
 The shouts now volumed to a vengeful roar,
 And, lo! the seething mob began to sway,
 And then lunged forward as a ship will strain
 'Gainst impact of the tempest. Then, it broke;

And everything that stood against its bulge
 Went under. Pillars fell as in the days
 When Samson marble used as peanut brittle;
 The stucco crashed from ceil; the lights went out;
 The soda-fountain blew up with a roar;
 Counters of chinaware and favrile glass,
 Mingled in iridescent glory with
 Ten thousand cans of French peas and tomates
 Poised *à la pyramide*, were hurled against
 The cashier and the grilled adjustment-desk;
 Whilst, over all, the great orchestrion played
 "Oh, Come and Be My Love!" And when, apace,
 The fire-department bore down on the scene,
 The automatic sprinklers were at work,
 Baptismal o'er the prostrate, stricken mass;
 Whilst soared above the echoes of lost souls
 A blond voice, still defiant, in distress:
 "I'll wait here till I get my one cent change!"

The ambul-wagon came; they put her in,
 A symphony in fragments; there she lay,
 Her right hand clutching some new crimping-tong,
 Whilst in her left, a broken ladder-step,
 Soft as a lily symbol in her hair,
 E'en seemed to breathe it had been truly saved
 To bear her footfall on the golden stair.

They die young, whom the gods love, we opine;
 Poor Guinevere, closed out at twenty-nine!



HIS NERVE

"HE—" "Well, I should think he has got nerve! Why, seventy-six relatives of the bride were present when he was married, and yet he went through the ceremony with a smile!"



HE RECOGNIZED THE RESEMBLANCE

STELLA—Why is the engagement off?

BELLA—He gave her a little hairless Mexican dog, and she said, "Oh, Mr. Baldy, how kind; this is just like you!"

L'INSTINCT

Par André Sardou

PERSONNAGES

FRANÇOISE

JEAN

TUILHIEUX

UN HOMME

Un galetas d'ouvrier. Une mansarde aux murs nus. La misère noire. FRANÇOISE est assise par terre, sur un tas de chiffons, hardes sordides, la tête entre les mains.

SCÈNE IÈRE—JEAN, FRANÇOISE.
Silence. JEAN ouvre la porte.
FRANÇOISE (*avec anxiété*)—Eh bien?... (*JEAN fait un geste désespéré et tombe assis.*) T'as encore rien trouvé?

JEAN—Rien du tout, partout les mêmes réponses, nous avons déjà trop d'ouvriers pour le travail à faire.

FRANÇOISE—C'est à désespérer!

JEAN—Ah! J'y renonce, depuis un mois que nous crèvons la misère noire, j'ai fait toutes les maisons. On veut bien me recevoir, mais on me dit de revenir dans deux mois: quand on ne me fiche pas à la porte brutalement. Et puis, la belle avance dans deux mois! Nous ne pouvons pas nous endormir comme des marmottes pendant ce temps-là, et puis, toujours, ce sera la même chose. Ah! si le patron n'avait pas fait faillite!

FRANÇOISE—Grâce à votre satanée grève.

JEAN—Moi... je n'en voulais pas de la grève, mais il a bien fallu s'en mettre, tout le monde crie après vous, on risque même sa peau si on ne veut pas marcher avec les camarades. Et puis, quand on en est, on devient enragé, on boit, on parle, on s'échauffe, on croit tout ce que racontent les meneurs, ils

vous bercent de belles promesses, vous montrent des lettres de syndicats qui doivent vous soutenir, ils vous font croire que plus on résistera, plus on obtiendra des patrons, c'est pas vrai, parce que eux aussi résistent et qu'ils sont les plus forts, et on en revient kif-kif comme avant avec des dettes en plus. Sauf cette fois on le patron a sauté! Mais, nous sommes tombés par terre, avec lui. Et puis, vois-tu, maintenant, quand j'arrive et que je dis que j'étais dans la maison Paterson, on me regarde du coin de l'œil, en se méfiant de moi. Maudite grève! On trimait comme des brutes avant, mais au moins on bouffait, maintenant nous crèvons la faim. Il reste du croûton de pain de ce matin?

FRANÇOISE (*le lui tendant*)—Tiens, voilà!

JEAN—Vrai! Il n'est pas gros!

FRANÇOISE—Malheureusement.

JEAN—A partager en deux, c'est maigre.

FRANÇOISE—Une bouchée seulement, j'ai pas faim!

JEAN—Ma pauvre vieille, je crois que tu le mangerais bien tout entier.

FRANÇOISE—Et puis, tu as couru toute la journée, au lieu que moi, je n'ai presque pas bougé d'ici.

JEAN—Il va bien falloir d'ailleurs bouger; car, plus d'argent pour payer le proprio. Le concierge m'a dit qu'il fallait déguerpir demain si on ne payait pas le terme que nous devons. C'est pas en tous les cas, en vendant nos meubles à la criée, que le patron pourra trouver l'argent. Plus rien à mettre au clou!

FRANÇOISE—Tu sais bien qu'hier on ne voulait me donner que trois francs

pour ces loques, et encore, disait l'employé, par pitié, car on ne prête pas à moins. Faillait encore mieux dormir dessus cette nuit puisqu'il restait encore du pain.

JEAN—Demain, il faudra y aller.

FRANÇOISE—Et puis quoi qu'on fera?

JEAN—On se paiera un déjeuner de prince avec les dix sous, j'étais fait pour le luxe.

FRANÇOISE—Et puis après?

JEAN—On s'offrira les seules choses gratis de Paris, un bain froid dans la Seine, le plongeon du haut d'un pont, et puis, ni vu, ni connu.

FRANÇOISE—J'veux pas mourir.

JEAN—Bien vrai, si tu regrettes la vie, c'est que t'es pas difficile, moi j'aime encore mieux aller faire le bouillon avec les chiens crevés et les assassinés.

FRANÇOISE—On a pourtant été heureux des fois.

JEAN—Oui, mais maintenant, c'est bien fini ce temps-là.

FRANÇOISE—Pourquoi? Il reviendra peut-être, le bonheur. Nous sommes dans une mauvaise passe, mais c'est pas la première fois, ça peut changer.

JEAN—T'es pas découragée, toi, parce que tu n'as pas vu comme moi qu'il m'était impossible de trouver de la besogne, faut tout même manger en attendant l'ouvrage. Tu connais un moyen de manger sans argent?

FRANÇOISE—Faut mendier! Regarde le vieux père Tuilhieux d'à côté, ça lui réussit bien, il est toujours à la porte de l'église, et il en reçoit des sous! Dam! C'est une bonne place. Je suis sûr qu'il a de l'argent.

JEAN—Tout ça, c'est des racontars.

FRANÇOISE—Pas du tout; toute la maison en parle et puis on le voit souvent revenir avec des paquets qu'il cache sous sa houppelande, sûr qu'il se paye des soupers fins.

JEAN—Tu crois.

FRANÇOISE—Tiens! l'autre jour il est rentré et je l'ai entendu compter les sous, il les laissait tomber l'un sur l'autre comme ça (elle fait le geste) pour faire des piles, sûr qu'il s'était fait au

moins une journée de six francs. J'ai essayé de voir par le trou de la serrure, mais il l'a bouchée de son côté.

JEAN—Vrai, c'est beau de gagner tant que cela sans rien faire!

FRANÇOISE—Il y a deux jours, il est venu chez lui, un type qui payait pas de mine, un camarade, et ils se disputaient tous les deux: le vieux criait: "T'as pas le droit de rester à c'te porte puisque j'ai payé la place et assez chère encore!" Et l'autre qui répondait: "C'est pas juste, elle est au premier occupant, c'est à toi qu'on donne le plus parce que t'es vieux et ton magot est assez gros on le sait bien," et le voisin se mettait de plus en plus en colère en disant qu'il n'avait pas le sou. Tu sais, l'autre disait vrai, le vieux a de la galette. Alors, pourquoi qu'on ne ferait pas comme lui.

JEAN—Sûr que ça rapporte. J'aurais pas à faire le fier, mais vrai, ça me fait honte de mendier, manque d'habitude peut-être. Et puis, j'inspire pas pitié. On se dit c'est un gaillard qu'est un feignant et par le froid les bourgeois qui ont les mains dans leurs poches n'aiment pas les sortir. On donne moins par le froid que par le chaud: C'est bête, mais c'est comme ça.

FRANÇOISE—Je pense: Si qu'on lui demandait au vieux de nous prêter un peu d'argent? On le rendrait plus tard.

JEAN—Ah ben! t'es bonne! Si tu crois que ce viel avare donnerait à d'autres ce qu'il se refuse à lui-même, on pourrait pas en obtenir un sou.

FRANÇOISE—Essayons tout de même.

JEAN (geste de découragement)—Si tu veux.

SCÈNE 2E—JEAN, FRANÇOISE, TUILHIEUX.

FRANÇOISE (va sur le palier et appelle)—Eh! père Tuilhieux! père Tuilhieux!

TUILHIEUX (dans la coulisse)—Quoique vous voulez? (Il sort sur le palier et arrêtant le mouvement de FRANÇOISE qui veut entrer chez lui.) Non, non. N'entrez pas.

JEAN (en scène)—Il se méfie!

FRANÇOISE—On pourrait pas vous dire un petit mot, voisin?

TUILHIEUX—Attendez, je viens. (*Il entre en scène avec FRANÇOISE, très méfiant.*) Eh bien, quoiqu'il y a?

FRANÇOISE—Ecoutez-moi, père Tuilhieux, vous voyez, nous sommes dans la misère. Nous avons faim et froid, je fais appel à votre bon cœur. Sauvez-nous.

TUILHIEUX—Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que j'y fasse, je suis aussi misérable que vous.

JEAN—Prêtez-nous un peu d'argent.

TUILHIEUX—Je n'ai rien.

FRANÇOISE—On vous le rendra bien tôt.

TUILHIEUX—Puisque je vous dis que je n'ai rien.

JEAN—Ça vous portera pas bonheur de nous refuser.

TUILHIEUX—Travaillez! Faites comme moi quand j'étais jeune, maintenant je suis un pauvre vieillard misérable, obligé de mendier pour ramasser juste de quoi vivre.

JEAN—Vous! Allons donc, vous êtes riche.

TUILHIEUX—Riche! moi riche, pour quoi dire de pareilles bêtises, vous m'insultez!

FRANÇOISE—Ecoutez, père Tuilhieux, vous avez bien quelques sous.

TUILHIEUX—Je n'ai rien, je vous répète, et je ne mange pas toujours à ma faim. Travaillez, vous êtes forts et vous n'avez pas honte de demander secours à un pauvre vieux comme moi.

JEAN—Je ne trouve pas d'ouvrage.

TUILHIEUX—C'est peut-être moi qui pourrais vous en donner, hein?

FRANÇOISE—Ayez pitié de nous. Vous avez bien ramassé quelques sous aujourd'hui.

TUILHIEUX (*s'en allant*)—Et moi, faut bien aussi que je vive. Chacun pour soi dans ce monde. (*Il sort.*)

SCÈNE 3E—JEAN, FRANÇOISE. *Ils se regardent désespérés.*

JEAN—Tu vois bien, j'avais raison, c'est la fin de la fin!

FRANÇOISE—La vieille crapule! Quel froid et un méchant croûton de pain dans le ventre! Penser que deux êtres sont réduits à cette misère.

Quelle pitié! Y a pas de Justice, ni de bon Dieu!

JEAN—Ça me révolte, quand je pense à ceux qui ont un bon dîner dans l'estomac et qui ont les pieds devant le feu, à boire des liqueurs et à fumer des cigares. Oh! fumer une bonne pipe! V'là ce que je regrette le plus.

FRANÇOISE—Qu'allons-nous devenir?

JEAN—Il n'y a plus rien à faire. Qu'est-ce que tu veux, Françoise, il vaut encore mieux mourir, au moins on n'a plus ni soif, ni faim, ni froid. On ne pense plus à rien, vrai! ce sera un soulagement de ne plus souffrir. Ce sera comme si on dormait; mais pour ne plus se réveiller et j'aurais pas le regret du réveil, j'ai bougrement trop faim. Si seulement je pouvais dormir—(*il tombe sur le grabat.* FRANÇOISE *s'assied, réfléchissant, elle regarde vers la porte condamnée. Silence. Petit bruit métallique dans la coulisse, venant de derrière la porte; s'interrompant parfois.*)

FRANÇOISE (*à JEAN*)—Ecoute.

JEAN—Quoi! laisse-moi.

FRANÇOISE—Ecoute donc!

JEAN—Laisse-moi dormir, 'cré nom!

(FRANÇOISE *se lève sans bruit et va écouter contre la porte. Elle revient vers le grabat.*)

FRANÇOISE—Jean, lève-toi.

JEAN (*geignant*)—Quoi! Quoi!

FRANÇOISE (*le secouant*)—Réveille-toi donc!

JEAN (*réveillé, haut*)—Vas-tu me laisser tranquille par tous les Tonnerres!

FRANÇOISE—Chut!... (*Montrant la porte.*) Il compte son argent.

JEAN—Oh!

(*Toute la scène suivante à voix très basse. Tous deux vont écouter à la porte.*)

FRANÇOISE—Tu entends?

JEAN—Non, j'ai les oreilles qui bourdonnent.

(*Bruit plus fort.*)

FRANÇOISE—Tiens! Tiens!

JEAN—Oui. Mais c'est pas des sous, c'est le bruit de l'argent, va, ce sont des tûnes. (*Silence.*) Bon Dieu de bon Dieu, ça c'est des louis.

FRANÇOISE—Tu crois?

JEAN—Je le jurerais—des louis.

FRANÇOISE—Des louis!

JEAN—Vieux saligaud, comment qu'il a fait pour avoir tout ça.

FRANÇOISE—Si jamais j'avais cru que ce sale loqueteux était si riche. (*Ils écoutent.*) Tu n'entends plus rien?

JEAN—Il nous a peut-être entendu causer.

FRANÇOISE—Peut-être bien! Ecoute-moi, Jean.

JEAN—Quoi?

FRANÇOISE (*hésitante*)—Si on le... si on le vol...

(*Ils se regardent.*)

JEAN—Oui, penser à cet argent ça donne de mauvaises idées.

(*On entend un bruit de voix.*)

FRANÇOISE—Tiens, il cause avec quelqu'un.

JEAN—Oui, c'est bien lui.

FRANÇOISE—Et je reconnais l'autre voix, c'est celle du type de l'autre jour.

JEAN—Ils se disputent.

FRANÇOISE (*l'oreille à la porte*)—Trop bas pour qu'on entende ce qu'ils disent.

JEAN—Ils doivent comploter quelque mauvais coup. Tout c'te or c'est pas naturel, c'est pas naturel.

FRANÇOISE—T'as la fièvre comme moi.

JEAN—Oui.

FRANÇOISE—C'est la faute du vieux.

JEAN—Peut-être bien. Tout c't' argent à côté de nous.

FRANÇOISE—Il n'a pas le droit d'avoir à lui tout seul tant d'argent.

JEAN—Pourquoi, pas le droit? Il l'a gagné.

FRANÇOISE—Peut-être bien, mais en mendiant.

JEAN—C'est pas une raison, c'est tout de même à lui.

FRANÇOISE—C'est pas juste, il n'a pas trimé comme nous et le v'là riche; il a beaucoup d'argent; peut-être cent mille francs, ça se voit ces choses-là!

JEAN—Oh! non, pas cent mille francs. Comme tu y vas! Mille, deux mille, on ne peut pas savoir.

FRANÇOISE—Si seulement on pouvait voir, mais il s'est calfeutré. Deux mille! ce serait beau tout de

même! Ce qu'on ferait nous autres avec deux mille francs!

JEAN—Tu parles, on serait riches!

FRANÇOISE—On se mettrait en boutique; une belle boutique toute bleue, avec un comptoir, j'serais au comptoir.

JEAN—Allons, t'es folle, tu t'montes la tête! Puisqu'on ne les a pas les mille francs c'est pas la peine de penser à ce qu'on ferait si on les avait.

FRANÇOISE—Si on les avait! bon Dieu de bon Dieu! on n'aurait pas froid et faim comme à c'te heure.

JEAN—Faut pas penser à ça, faut pas penser à ça!

FRANÇOISE—Et dire que j'ai eu pitié de lui un jour, il y a trois mois, on était à l'aise à ce moment-là, j'y ai donné du pain tant il avait l'air miteux avec sa grande barbe crasseuse et toujours couvert de vieilles loques, vrai, si j'avais su...

JEAN—Allons, tu te montes la tête, sois raisonnable.

FRANÇOISE—Fais pas le malin, c't' argent te trotte aussi dans la cervelle, ça vous bouleverse aussi de sentir si près de vous une fortune et puis, si on l'avait on serait riches, mais là, riches, sans plus de misères. Vrai, c'est bien notre tour, nous l'avons bien mérité.

JEAN—Oui, mais ça ferait pas l'affaire du vieux.

FRANÇOISE—Il n'est pas juste que tout cet or soit à lui. Que qu'il fait de c't' or. Il est aussi malheureux que s'il l'avait pas, il mange pas à sa faim; il a froid comme nous, pas vrai, il n'a que le plaisir de compter ses louis. La belle avance, il faudrait mieux qu'il ait des fausses pièces; il en aurait plus, et puis quoi, s'il l'avait plus, y serait pas plus malheureux, y aurait rien de changé pour lui, au lieu que nous, on saurait bien l'utiliser. Ça serait pas pour le compter qu'on l'aurait. On serait respecté dans le quartier... On t'appellerait: Monsieur et moi: Madame.

JEAN—T'es folle, j'te dis qu't'es folle!

FRANÇOISE—Non. Je suis point folle, et pis, lui, il est vieux, il crèvera bientôt tandis que nous, il faudra se

tuer demain, parce qu'on a plus de quoi manger. Ah! le maudit vieux, le maudit vieux.

JEAN—C'est bien vrai tout de même que c't' argent lui est bien inutile.

FRANÇOISE—Et nous, il nous sauverait.

JEAN—C'est bien vrai.

(Ils se regardent.)

FRANÇOISE—Alors?

JEAN—Alors, quoi que tu veux que je fasse on peut pourtant pas le voler.

FRANÇOISE—Tu veux pas?

JEAN—Non, je veux pas.

FRANÇOISE—Tu veux pas de l'argent de ce vieux pour nous tirer de la misère. Y me dégoûte cette vieille crapule avec son or, j'ai froid, j'ai faim, et je veux pas mourir, entends-tu, je veux pas mourir, puisqu'on pourrait être heureux si t'étais pas un lâche!

JEAN—Alors, il faut attendre que l'autre s'en aille et puis que lui dorme. *(Il écoute à la porte.)* J'entends plus rien. Oui mais comment, ça sera pas facile.

FRANÇOISE—Par la porte, on l'enfoncera.

JEAN—Il entendrait.

FRANÇOISE—Il n'y a pourtant que ce moyen en allant doucement.

JEAN—S'il se réveille, appelle, on nous arrêtera.

FRANÇOISE—Il faut pourtant bien risquer son vatout. Il en vaut la peine, et puis, la porte ouvre de notre côté, tu dévisseras doucement la serrure avec ton couteau.

JEAN—Oui, mais s'il se réveille, il va crier, et nous sommes perdus.

FRANÇOISE—Tues fou! *(Elle montre le couteau.)*

JEAN—Oh! tais-toi!

FRANÇOISE—Il le faut!

JEAN—Non, pas ça... l'assassiner!

FRANÇOISE—S'il se débat!

JEAN—Oh! non, non... j'aime mieux me tuer.

FRANÇOISE—Et moi, je veux pas mourir; tu ni as dit toi-même, tout-à-l'heure, qu'il n'y avait plus d'espoir, il faut une mort, deux mêmes, puisque nous nous tuerons demain, ne vaut-il pas mieux que ce sait lui qui...

JEAN—Non, non, je ne pourrai pas, je sens bien que je ne pourrai pas. Je tremblerai, voyons, Françoise, je suis un brave homme, je ne puis pas devenir un assassin. Je ne peux pas, je ne peux pas. *(Il tombe assis.)*

FRANÇOISE—Je veux vivre! Tout le monde a le droit de vivre, on le tuera que s'il peut nous perdre... Tiens, il reste un peu d'eau-de-vie, ça te donnera du cœur au ventre.

JEAN *(il refuse d'abord, puis)*—Donne! *(Il boit à la bouteille.)*

FRANÇOISE—Gardes-en pour après, t'en auras besoin pour te remonter.

JEAN—Non, décidément, je ne peux pas, j'ai froid.

FRANÇOISE—Tu as peur?

JEAN—Oui, j'ai peur. Mais non, je n'ai pas peur, c'est la faim! Dieu que j'ai faim! *(Il reboit. Cependant FRANÇOISE a pris le couteau, en finissant de boire. JEAN la voit. Ils se regardent.)*

FRANÇOISE—Il coupe pas très bien.

JEAN—Donne!... *(Douxment sur la pierre de la fenêtre il l'aiguise.)* La virole est solide, faut pas qu'il se referme... Tu as de l'eau?

FRANÇOISE—Oui, pourquoi?

JEAN—Pour se laver les mains tout-à-l'heure.

FRANÇOISE—Voilà! *(Elle met à l'avant scène une cuvette ébréchée.)*

JEAN *(essayant le fil du couteau)*—Ça va bien, maintenant... Il faut d'abord essayer de le baillonner.

FRANÇOISE—Attends... avec ça... *(lui tendant une loque qu'elle a ramassée).* L'argent doit être dans la paillasse, je chercherai pendant que tu le tiendras et puis s'il bouge, tu frappes.

JEAN *(voix éteinte)*—Oui. Et puis on s'en ira...

FRANÇOISE—Au petit jour, on court au chemin de fer, et on part n'importe où... et on sera heureux.

JEAN *(atterré)*—Redonne-moi à boire. Attends, attends encore un peu.

FRANÇOISE *(méprisante)*—Tu es lâche!

JEAN—Ah! Tu dis que je suis lâche! Eh! bien, tu vas voir.

(FRANÇOISE lui fait signe de baisser la voix.)

FRANÇOISE (*écoutant à la porte*)—J'entends plus rien, y doit dormir... Tu y es, j'ai le baillon.

JEAN—Allons doucement, tout doucement. (*Il cherche à devisser la serrure, il s'arrête et écoute.*)

FRANÇOISE—Y grouille pas?

JEAN—Il a le sommeil dur, il le sera encore plus tout-à-l'heure. (JEAN s'arrête.)

FRANÇOISE—Ça y est?

JEAN—J'ai chaud: que c'est dur de tuer un homme!

FRANÇOISE—Vas-y-donc!

(*On entend un bruit de dispute.*)

JEAN—Chut! Ecoutez!... L'autre est encore là!

(*Cris plus forts.*)

FRANÇOISE—Malheur! Quoi qu'y fait?

(JEAN redescend en scène. FRANÇOISE reste à écouter à la porte. Bruits de lutte, cris, appels.)

VOIX DE TUILHIEUX—Au secours! A l'assassin!

JEAN—Nom de Dieu! On le tue!... (*Il se précipite à la porte suivi de FRANÇOISE. Il essaye d'enfoncer la porte, criant*) On y va, courage!

FRANÇOISE—Enfonce!

JEAN—J'ai plus la force!

FRANÇOISE (*elle aide JEAN*)—Courage! Courage!

JEAN—Sacrée porte!

(*Ils enfoncent la porte.*)

JEAN (*entre, on le voit saisir un homme qu'il prend à la gorge et qu'il fait rentrer en scène*)—Bandit! Crapule!

(*L'homme parvient à échapper à l'étreinte, bouscule FRANÇOISE et s'échappe par la porte. JEAN tombe à terre. Brisé.*)

FRANÇOISE (*à JEAN*)—T'es blessé?

JEAN—Non, il s'est ensauvé le brigand!

FRANÇOISE (*montrant TUILHIEUX*)—Et lui? (*Elle entre.*) Il est mort?

JEAN—Ah! mon Dieu! Si on nous soupçonnait!

FRANÇOISE (*qui s'est penché sur l'ouvrier*)—Non, il n'est pas blessé, il est simplement évanoui de peur. Tu l'as sauvé, le vieux, pourquoi?

JEAN—Est-ce que je sais, quand on

entend appeler au secours un homme, on essaye de le sauver, par instinct.

FRANÇOISE—Et puis l'argent aurait été chipé.

(*A eux deux ils le trainent dans la chambre dans la lumière.*)

JEAN—J'ai point pensé à ça. Apporte de l'eau.

FRANÇOISE—Voilà. (*Elle apporte la cuvette.*)

JEAN—Va-t'y se décider à rouvrir les yeux?

FRANÇOISE—Il a été un peu étranglé, regarde.

JEAN—Il n'a pas la gorge plus sèche que moi.

FRANÇOISE—Essaye de lui faire avaler quelques gouttes d'eau-de-vie.

JEAN—Cristi! Il a les dents serrées.

FRANÇOISE—Avec la pointe de ton couteau.

JEAN—Et avale donc, et avale donc, il n'en restera plus.

FRANÇOISE—Il ouvre les yeux, ça va mieux.

JEAN—Eh bien, père Tuilhieux, il faut pas nous regarder avec des yeux effarés...

TUILHIEUX—Dieu! que j'ai eu peur!

JEAN—Dame, vous l'avez échappé belle, un peu plus ça y était.

(*JEAN et FRANÇOISE se regardent.*)

TUILHIEUX—Il s'est sauvé?

JEAN—Il s'est esquivé à l'anglaise, faut croire qu'il ne s'intéresse pas à votre santé.

TUILHIEUX—Le misérable! Sans vous j'étais mort. Ah! vous êtes de braves gens. (*Tout-à-coup*) L'argent! L'argent! Il l'a volé?

(*JEAN se trouble.*)

FRANÇOISE—Quel argent?

TUILHIEUX—Il venait pour me voler et m'assassiner, ce brigand. J'avais quelques sous dans un petit sac, sous mon oreiller. Attendez, je vais voir. (*Il essaye de se relever et ne peut pas.*)

JEAN—Vous ne pouvez pas bouger, attendez, j'y vas!

TUILHIEUX—Mon Dieu! pourvu qu'il n'ait pas pris l'argent!

(*JEAN et FRANÇOISE entre dans la chambre.*)

FRANÇOISE (*bas*)—Fais semblant de

chercher on dira que l'autre l'a volé et on le gardera.

JEAN (*il prend le sac*)—Non, faut pas faire ça! (*Il rentre.*) Voilà, père Tuilhieux, votre magot, et dites donc, il est lourd!

TUILHIEUX—Que je suis content, mes amis, que je suis donc heureux, heureusement vous étiez là et vous m'avez sauvé la vie!

JEAN—On fait ce qu'on peut!

TUILHIEUX—Ce misérable, ce bandit, cet assassin!

JEAN (*à FRANÇOISE*)—C'est bien grâce à lui qu'il vit encore!

TUILHIEUX—Mes braves amis, je me reprends d'avoir refusé de vous secourir. Je ne serai pas un ingrat vous pouvez en être sûr. Sans vous je serais égorgé, vous me paraissez bien misérables. J'ai des petites économies... Oh! très peu mais je puis vous aider. Et puis je connais des gens

très-haut placés, ça vous étonne, n'est-ce pas? Eh bien je parlerai de vous au curé de mon établis de ma paroisse, il signalera votre conduite, il demandera une décoration pour vous, il vous protégera, vous trouvera une place. On dit du mal des curés, on a tort, ce sont de braves gens. Et puis s'il n'y avait plus de curés, il n'y aurait plus d'églises et ça ne ferait pas mon affaire. Ah! mes enfants, mes chers enfants, je vous bénis, vous voyez bien, Jean, que vous êtes plus fort que moi, un pauvre vieillard, tenez, je vous propose désormais de laisser cette porte ouverte, vous me protégerez, nous vivrons avec ce que nous gagnerons. En ce moment, j'ai un peu d'argent, nous pourrions patienter en attendant des jours meilleurs, mais vous me protégerez, n'est-ce pas, vous me protégerez!

RIDEAU.



THE LOVER WIND

THE wind is busy with the leaves;
 Music, as of sleep, he weaves,
 Tunes but dreamers know.
 No other fingers deft as his,
 Wood-poet, at his melodies;
 None else may murmur so.

Oft with the laughter of the leaf
 Flutters forth a hurrying grief,
 Softer than a sigh.
 He sends it to one gentlest heart;
 Far Silence hears her lover's art—
 She cometh by-and-bye.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.



NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR—Any applicants for the position of circulation man?

BUSINESS MANAGER—There are two—a retired astronomer and a plumber's bookkeeper.

"Well, tell the astronomer we won't want him."

ROMANCE

IN quiet splendor fell the Southern night,
 And wrapt in dusk the little city lay,
 Drowsing, and dreaming of another day
 When Dawn should bring again its joy and light.
 Above it hung the new-moon's crescent bright,
 And myriad stars along the sky's blue way
 Gathered to wonder at their rivals gay,
 That twinkled o'er the Plaza's pavements white.

Idly I sauntered in the fragrant gloom,
 Under the lipping palms, and found the street
 Where hung the balcony, cage-like, above.
 Behind those bars I saw a girl's face bloom,
 And heard another Juliet repeat
 To me, her Romeo, her words of love.

JULIAN DURAND.



THE END

FIRST GIRL—There goes Edyth Smythe. She was in love with the same man I was.

SECOND GIRL—But it's all over now?
 "Oh, yes—she married him."



NEGLECTED

VON BLUMER—Who's taking care of the baby?
 MRS. VON BLUMER—No one. The new nurse is with him.



OUT of sight, out of mind; in sight, never mind.

POOR MR. SNALE

By J. J. Bell

“**W**OULD you write some verses in my album, Mr. Snale?” Cynthia said to the little plain man at her side.

Mr. Snale blushed. “Certainly, Miss West, if you wish. I’ll be pleased and honored.”

“Oh, thank you, so much. I hardly dared to ask you; but I should feel so proud to have the lines of a real poet in my book.”

He winced, for he was modest, and hated to be regarded as a curiosity. “Ah, you must not call me a poet, Miss West; I only make verses.”

Ill-natured people said that verses were all Mr. Snale made, and jeered when they observed the signature, “Hector Brisbane Snale,” in dainty periodicals devoted chiefly to the management of babies, lovers, husbands and households. But these ill-natured people did not know that he made nearly twenty pounds per annum in the service of the muse, which is fair remuneration, as things go, in the singing trade. This sordid detail, however, is mentioned merely to encourage those whose souls have been depressed, whose floods of song have been rudely checked, by the cruel statements of some to the effect that writing verse does not pay.

But it must not be thought that Hector B. Snale wrote for gold—or, rather, silver. Nay, it must be distinctly understood that he disposed of his earnings through channels of charity, and was content to live quietly on the income left him by his parents, which amounted to a trifle over four hundred a year. He had been in business, but had retired at the age of thirty,

purchased a cottage with a small but secluded garden, and there settled down to cultivate roses and rhyme.

As has been said, some of the Dove-dale people sneered at him; but there were others who pitied him, and a few who liked him. Cynthia West was one of the latter. She was used to meeting young men whose success, commercial or otherwise, provided them with a good stock of assurance and, perchance, conceit; she was accustomed to encounter strong and pushing characters at home and during her visits to town; she was acquainted also with men who were failures; but in Mr. Snale she discovered a personality that interested her by reason of a queer mixture of pride and humility—pride in his occupation, humility in the results thereof.

And it was due to her kindly encouragement that on this particular Summer afternoon the verse-maker sat in her drawing-room, talked to her under cover of the conversation carried on by her mother and half-a-dozen other visitors, and promised to write “some verses” in her album. He had written verses in a few other albums simply to oblige their owners; in Cynthia’s case it would be different, he told himself, as he glanced at her profile during a pause in their talk. He would write verses in her album simply to oblige himself, and, if she were pleased, he would perhaps—

“How are the roses, Mr. Snale?” asked Miss West, suddenly, interrupting the flow of his thoughts.

“The roses? Oh, of course—the roses are beautiful just now; they

always are—I mean, they are doing pretty well this Summer.”

“Dr. Brighton told us yesterday that you had been most successful this year.”

“Ah, well,” said the verse-maker, recovering from his confusion, “Brighton is a kindly critic. He enjoys a cigar in my little garden, and then goes out and praises my roses to all and sundry. You must not let him mislead you. My roses are sweet, but quite commonplace—like my verses,” he muttered, as an afterthought.

Cynthia missed the last remark.

“It’s too bad of you to have such a high, thick hedge around your garden. Nearly every day I pass your house, and vainly try to imagine what your roses are like.”

“I never lock the gate,” he returned, softly.

“Oh, Mr. Snale, I wouldn’t dream of—”

“Miss West,” he said, quickly and nervously, “nothing would make me so happy as to see you in my little garden. Won’t you come some day? I wish—”

It was the boldest speech he had ever made in his life, and for a moment he sat dumb, in sheer bewilderment at his own courage.

“You are very kind, and, of course, I shall be delighted,” she replied, easily and naturally. “I’ll just walk in the first fine day, and give you a surprise.”

“Not a surprise so much as a pleasure,” murmured Mr. Snale, blushing at his own temerity. Truly he was coming out of his shell! Cynthia was glad to note the change in the shy little man in whom she confessed to such a friendly interest.

“He only wants a little encouragement to brighten him up,” she said to herself. “He needs more than flowers and poetry to keep him cheerful when so many people snub him.”

Presently, Mr. Snale took his leave, carrying with him Miss West’s album, which she put into his hands with a pretty apology for troubling him.

“It shall be ready when you come to see my roses,” he said, softly. “You

are really coming?” he asked, anxiously.

“Oh, yes,” she replied, smiling, “the first fine day.”

“What a peculiar little man!” said one of Mrs. West’s visitors, a massive lady, when he had gone.

“He leads such a lazy, useless life,” remarked another, who never rose before midday, and had not walked a furlong for fifteen years.

“He ought to marry,” observed another, who was said to beat her husband at frequent intervals.

“His poetry is very poor stuff,” said a fourth, who possessed a copy of Tennyson which she had not opened since her school-days.

“I rather like some of his verses,” remarked her neighbor. “They are very sweet, but rather sad.”

“So do I,” said Mrs. West; “and I think Mr. Snale only wants a little society to draw him out and make him quite interesting.”

“Ye-es,” admitted the lady on her left; “but I am afraid he is very ungrateful. My girls once asked him to a progressive whist party, and, if you will believe me, the man was a perfect bore the whole evening—so dull! oh, so terribly dull!”

“Why,” said Cynthia, laughing, “he’s only shy. When you get to know him he’s very nice indeed.”

“Ha! my dear,” tittered the massive lady, playfully shaking a pale-gray sausage of a forefinger at the girl, “you must be careful, or we’ll report you to *somebody*.”

“Te—he—he!” giggled the lady who was said to beat her husband.

Miss West smiled good-humoredly, as she poured out a cup of tea for herself.

II

THE next day was wet, but Mr. Snale was not altogether sorry. At any rate, he employed the rainy hours in tidying his garden—it was far from untidy to begin with—trimming walks and borders, and cheerfully exerting

himself in view of Miss West's visit. How kind of her to promise to come! What a happiness it would be for him when he led her among his roses! Then, in the evening, he locked himself up in his study, produced a manuscript which had occupied him the better part of the previous night, revised the lines again and again, and finally inscribed them in Cynthia's album.

"I hope she will be pleased," he murmured, as he regarded his work.

He hardly slept that night, and was up in the dawn, anxious about the weather. The rain was still falling, but, as the sun rose, the sky cleared, and by breakfast-time Mr. Snale was in such a fever of delight that he could neither eat nor read the newspapers.

"She will come in the forenoon," he said to himself, and he hurried into the village to order strawberries and cream, a novel proceeding on his part, and one which gave rise to much gossip in Dovedale.

At one o'clock he decided that it had been stupid of him to expect her earlier in the day. "Of course," he thought, "she meant the afternoon—perhaps about three o'clock." Wherefore, he requested his housekeeper to hold herself in readiness to brew the best tea she could at a moment's notice, and to have the table in the Summer-house laid out as daintily as possible.

At three o'clock Mr. Snale was in a high state of excitement; at half-past three he was still more restless; at four o'clock he became suddenly depressed, and at a quarter-past it would be difficult to imagine the depth of his disappointment.

At twenty minutes past four the garden gate opened . . . And then Mr. Snale saw the blue sky, the green hedge, and the red, pink, yellow and white roses meet and mingle in a confused whirl of glorious, lovely colors. Cynthia had come at last.

She was very friendly and gracious and sweet and cool, and almost immediately put her host at his ease. It is true that she carried on the greater part of the conversation, as they

strolled among the roses; but afterward, as they rested in the Summer-house, her companion talked freely, and even amusingly, so that Miss West felt that her scheme for "drawing out" the lonely little man was likely to succeed. She enjoyed the refreshment he had provided, and told him so, thereby making him more foolishly happy than she had done by her admiration for his roses.

Had Cynthia been a flirt, she would have brought about his downfall there and then. As it was, she had unconsciously led him through the meadows of vain delight to the very edge of the precipice of false hope above the abyss of disappointment. Perhaps it was some vague fear that made her rise suddenly and say she must take her departure. Her host, after vainly requesting her to remain a little longer, begged her to wait in the Summer-house until he procured her album, which he had left in his study.

She nodded and thanked him, adding some pretty words which would have meant nothing to an ordinary man, but which meant a great deal to little Mr. Snale. He left her enjoying the bunch of roses he had plucked for her—the pick of his garden—and hastened into the house.

As Mr. Snale, with the book in his hand, was about to leave the study, he observed Dr. Brighton pass the window.

"Hullo!" he cried; but the young doctor apparently did not hear, and walked straight on to the Summer-house.

"Glad Brighton didn't come sooner," said Mr. Snale to himself, as he stepped out of the cottage.

And then he saw Cynthia, the bunch of roses lying at her feet, laughingly submitting to being kissed by the new arrival.

"Hullo, old man," exclaimed the doctor, a trifle abashed, on observing the verse-maker; "come along. Don't mind us."

But Mr. Snale only stood and stared.

"You must excuse George," said

Miss West, blushing. "He said he might come to take me home, but I forgot to tell you."

The little man came to himself at last, and advanced to shake hands with the doctor.

"Of course; of course," he said, trying to smile pleasantly; "of course, of——"

"Wasn't it good of Mr. Snale to write in my book?" said Cynthia, turning to Dr. Brighton.

"Rather," returned the doctor. "His page will be worth a hundred guineas some day. Eh, old man?"

Miss West smiled kindly, and shook hands with the verse-maker.

"Many, many thanks," she said, gently, thinking for the first time what a worn-looking little man he was.

They left Mr. Snale among his roses, and, as they went homeward, the doctor chuckled:

"Poor old Snale! Don't believe he knew we were engaged."

"Well, considering that it happened only the other day——" said Cynthia, laughing, and leaving her speech unfinished.

But, when she reached home, and read the verses newly written in her album, she locked her door and indulged in "a good cry." And yet the verses were the happiest that Hector Brisbane Snale had ever made. But Cynthia began to remember several little things, one of them being a bunch of roses which she had left on the floor of the Summer-house.



HOW TO LOVE A GIRL

ALL girls like to be loved, but they are not all alike, and care should be taken to discriminate among the many varieties.

In making love to an old maid, the preliminaries only are necessary. Give her a fair start, and she will do the rest. Remember that she is making up for lost time, and hold on tight, and shut your eyes. As long as she has taken the cue, don't fear the result. You needn't do a thing.

When she is young and innocent, with a frank, open-work countenance and with no experience, get up early every morning and watch her door-step. There are others on the same trail, and if you wish to be an active member of the club, you must do your share of the work. If she accepts flowers and fruit readily, don't get too gay. This is only your privilege. And when you feel that you cannot stand it any longer, tell her so, and leave the rest to her. She will be your teacher. You needn't do a thing.

With a widow, be calm and unmoved in the face of danger. You are in for it, and don't get rattled. Sit around where you can be reached, and submit to everything. But remember that, so far as you are concerned, there is nothing doing. It won't be necessary.

If she is a tall, straight blonde, with lustrous eyes and a large, open smile, don't allow your feelings to overcome you. Do the right thing, and wait. She will see that you are well taken care of.

Or if she is any other kind of girl, it doesn't matter. Don't do a thing yourself. She will do the rest. No matter how slow you may be, have no fear of the ultimate result.

But be sure of one thing. Before beginning, get a million or so.

TOM MASSON.

THE PIPER

By Theodosia Garrison

L OUD he piped for them to dance—
Oh, the gay retreat, advance,
Like surging waves that lean and lift
To know the red star's glance!
And their bare brown feet's refrain
Was like patter of the rain
That thrills in May-time through the green
Where cloistered birds are fain.

*Gay the Piper played, the while grinned he craftily,
"Oh, rare and ripe for this I pipe, pay ye must!" quoth he.*

Oh, the dancers' eyes were bright
As a flame in middle night,
For shrill he piped the joy of life,
The daring of delight.
And they tripped it to and fro
As the light-foot fairies go
That circle on the greensward
When a crescent moon dips low.

*Fast the piper played, the while grinned he craftily,
"For this my tune or late or soon, pay ye must!" quoth he.*

Oh, the Piper's notes were sweet
As a rose in noontide heat,
And love was like the pulse of flame
That through his measures beat.
And of love his pipings were
Till the air was all astir
With fragrance of his music
Spilled as spikenard and myrrh.

*Soft the Piper played, the while grinned he craftily,
"For this my best and loveliest, pay ye must!" quoth he*

But what time the twilight died,
Oh, he flung his pipes aside,
And, "Sweethearts, now comes reckoning!"
Grim Time, the Piper, cried.
"Give me guerdon for my pains,
Give me payment for my strains,
Now yield me for your pleasuring
The price my piping gains."

"Nay, but wherewith may we pay?" . . . Grinned he craftily,
 "Youth of you and truth of you and joy of you!" quoth he.

Oh, the shrinking forms and bent,
 Oh, the weary feet that went
 Through dust of all regretting
 From the place of merriment!
 And again the Piper blew
 For another madder crew
 In silver of the moonlight
 And the shimmer of the dew.

*Gay the Piper played, the while grinned he craftily,
 "Yea, good sooth, I pipe for youth, and take my pay!" quoth he.*



RATHER FLAT AFFAIR

FIRST BABY—Was there a crush at your party?
 SECOND BABY—Oh, yes—a fat nurse sat right down on me!



ONLY ONE LIFE REMAINED

FIRST CAT—You seem to be afraid of the water.
 SECOND CAT—Well, why shouldn't I? I have been drowned eight times.



NOT HIS FRIENDS NOW

SHE—But have you no friends?
 HE—Not one. But I have a slight speaking acquaintance with a number
 of persons who used to borrow money from me when I was wealthy.



HAROLD—Honest, doctor, have we got twins in the house?
 THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN—Yes, my boy.
 "Well, say! Let me break the news to mother, will you

THE LOVES AND THE YEARS

By Kate Masterson

SCENE—A bachelor apartment. Time—Midnight; the dawn of the New Year. Chimes are ringing. The snow is falling outside, and the moon is shining. A table, spread with the remains of a supper, stands disordered in the centre of the room, the candle-shades awry, the tapers flickering low. The cloth is stained and rumpled from the overturned glasses. There are dying logs on the hearth, and their piny odor mixes fragrantly and sadly with that of drooping roses.

From the next room, where the guests have gone with their host, who is giving his farewell supper to the men that are to act as his ushers during this day which has just come, there sounds the music of a banjo and a piano, with voices singing:

"To you and the glad young year, sweet-heart!

To the glad young year—and you!"

There is the kiss of clinking glasses. The chimes cease their ringing, and a clock strikes the half-hour. The Old Year, who has been crouching by the dying fire, falls dead in a huddled heap upon the hearth. The New Year, laughing, looks in through the heavy curtains. From dim corners of the room flutter Little Loves, blowing kisses to the new-comer, and, gathering roses from the table, they pelt them at him, beckoning him in.

But one Little Love goes sadly to the side of the Old Dead Year, and places a rose on his bosom, sobbing:

"How sweet he was, how sweet!"

The Little Loves turn mockingly away as, with flower garlands, they draw the Young Year into the room, and guide him to the chair at the head of the table.

"Poor Old Year!" sighs the Little Love.

"I found him very slow!" sneers the False Love, and he yawns.

"He brought me no luck!" pouts the Forgotten Love; "he failed to recognize me when the Spring had gone. The New Year will be kinder, I hope!"

"He promised much, but gave little!" says the Selfish Love, a fat little fellow with a double-chin.

"I outgrew him!" remarks the Calf Love. "He was behind the times, poor old chap!"

"He went out like a Roman-candle," says the Warm Love. "He was not lasting."

He joins his fellows clustering around the smiling New Year—all but the one Love that hovers by the hearth where the Old Year lies.

"Here are roses for your hair!" says the False Love, twining faded blossoms in the curls of the New Year.

"And wine for your lips!" adds the Fickle Love, offering him dregs in a glass.

"No, no!" cries the Pure Love, and pushes toward him a finger-bowl of water.

"Here's ice for it," says the Cold Love.

"It needs flavor," remarks the Naughty Love.

"It needs flame!" urges the Warm Love, drawing over a candle, the shade of which has ignited.

"Take them all!" says the Big Love.

"And die of surfeit!" cries the Little Love. "Be a miser if you would keep your treasure!"

"Right you are!" exclaims the Self-

ish Love. "Only valuable affection is appreciated!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughs the Naughty Love; "he knows—the beggar!"

The Forgotten Love sighs over a rose. "I was proud once," he moans; "I was forgotten!"

"I rode away!" smiles the False Love; "I shall be remembered through the ages!"

"What bally-rot!" lisps the Calf Love; "you know nothing about it!"

"What are we, I wonder?" questions the Pure Love.

"Snow on the mountain-top!" answers the Cold Love.

"Fire that burns out!" murmurs the Warm Love.

"Everything!" says the Big Love.

"Nothing!" corrects the Little Love.

"Jokes!" laughs the Naughty Love.

"Tragedies!" moans the Forgotten Love.

"Gain!" speaks out the Selfish Love.

"Pleasure!" snickers the False Love.

"Amusement!" lirts the Fickle Love.

The New Year has ceased to smile at their chatter. He is listening to the voice of the Little Lonesome Love crooning beside the Old Dead Year, unheeding of his presence.

He speaks for the first time.

"You are all wrong," he says; "you

are unreal as phantoms! None of you shall abide here with me!"

There is a painful silence, and the Loves flutter sadly back to their dim corners. The turquoise morning comes through the curtains. The Little Lone Love kisses the rose on the Old Year's breast.

"Good-bye, my friend!" he whispers.

The New Year draws near, looking kindly upon the two.

"Who are you?" he questions, gently. "Are you the Dead Love, that you remain with the Old Year when all the others have flown away?"

"I am the True Love," says the Little Lone Love; "the only Love that remains always! And the Old Year was very good. I know you not, stranger!"

"Let us be friends, then," says the New Year, reverently.

The men troop back into the dining-room. Their hats are even more awry than the candle-shades, and their collars are wilted. They are singing, badly out of tune, something like this:

"To you and the sweet Old Year, dear heart!

To the sweet Old Year—and you!"



MOBILITE

OH, ask me not wherefore I change, but see!
Change visits all thou lovest next to me;
From Nature's self I drew mine errant ways,
Her tides, her flowers, her veering lights and days!

Yet grieve not that I change; for change on change
Shall bring me back—'tis but a circle's range!
Then wait me, for thou canst, so firm of soul;
Thou art my starting and my final goal.

EDITH M. THOMAS.



COULD IMPROVE ON IT

FLORENCE—I have something to tell you, dear, but it isn't worth repeating.
PAULINE—Do tell me. It will be when I get through with it.